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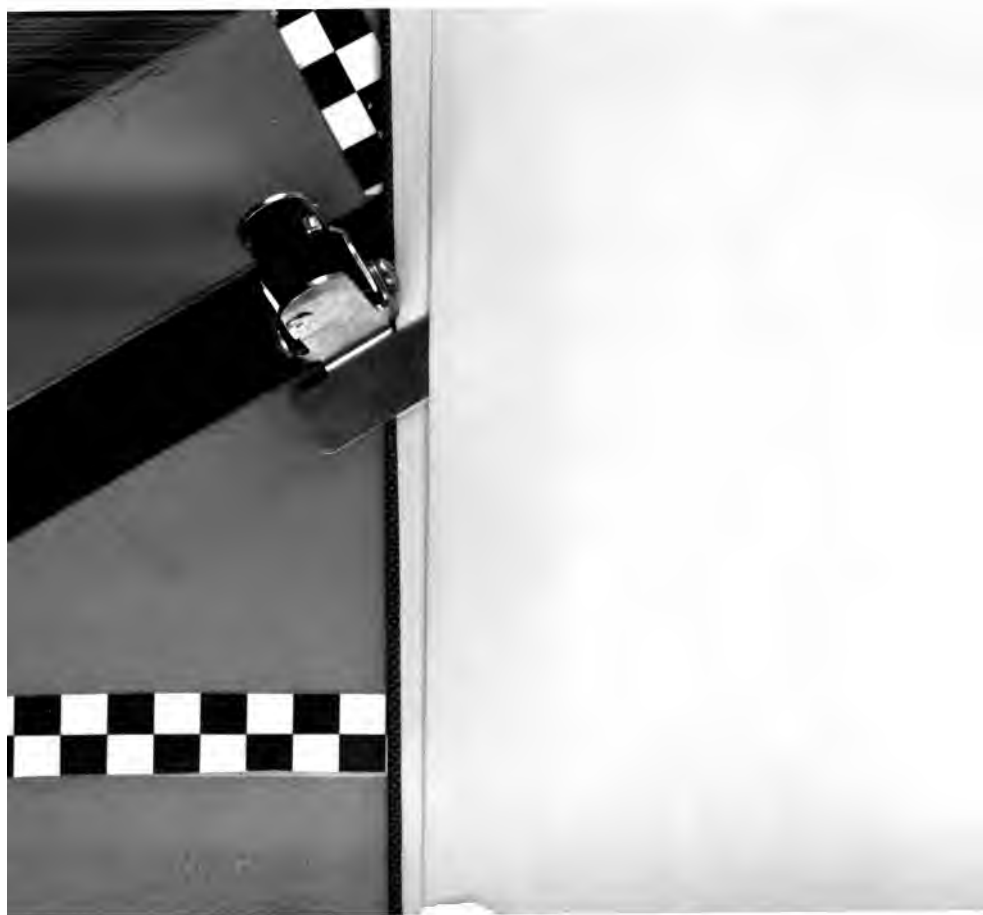
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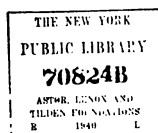






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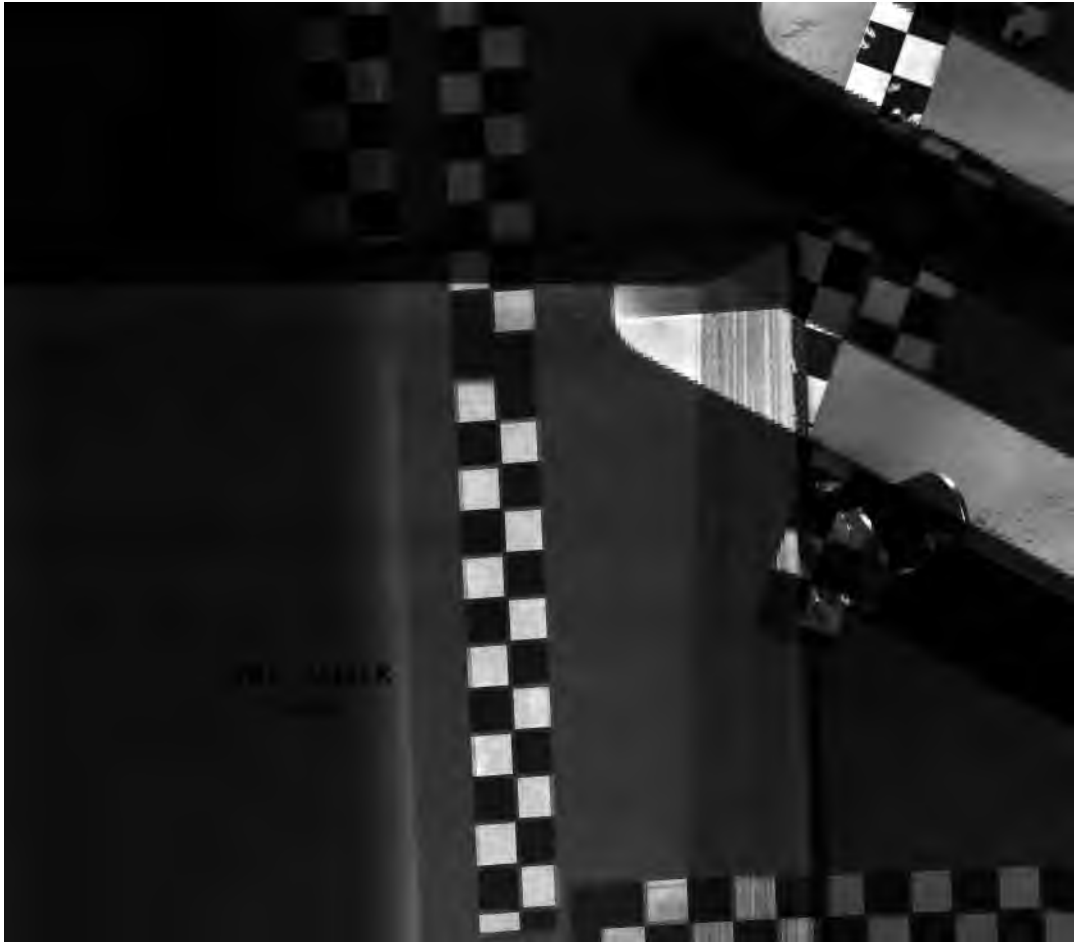
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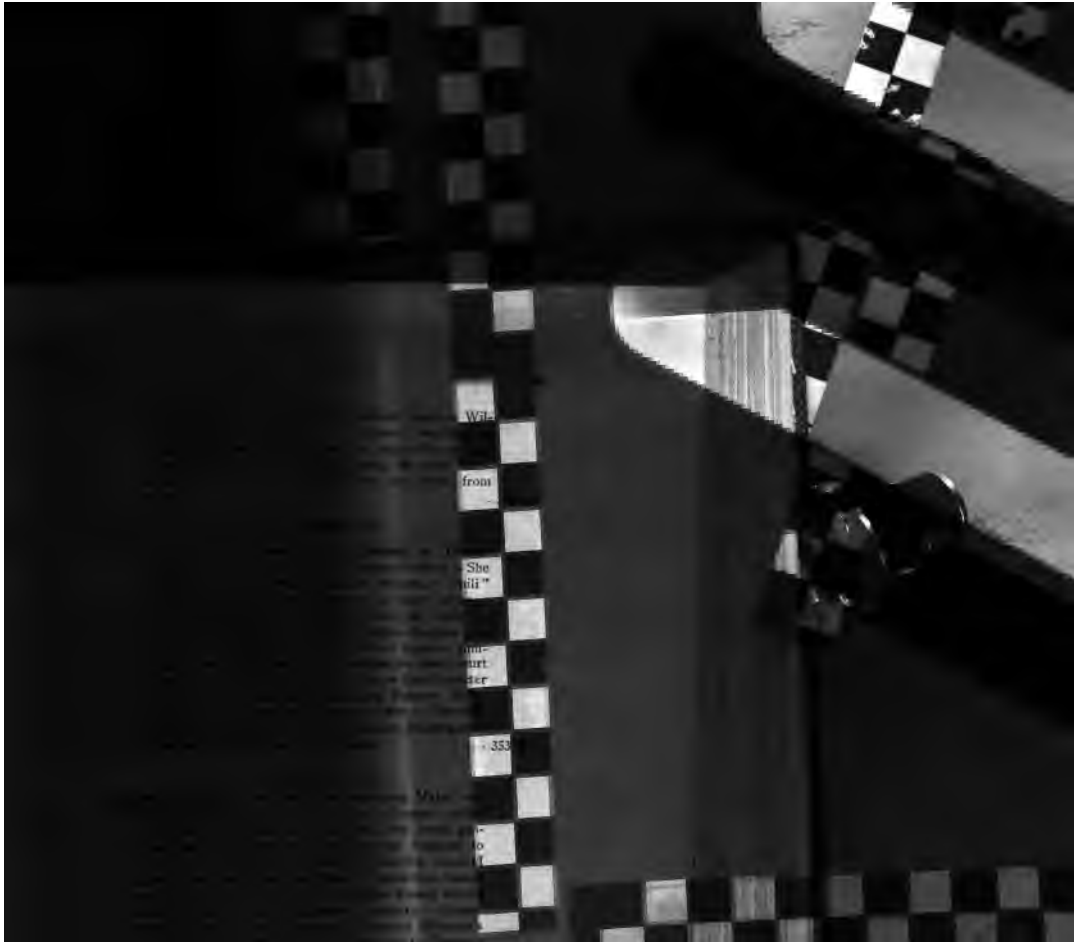
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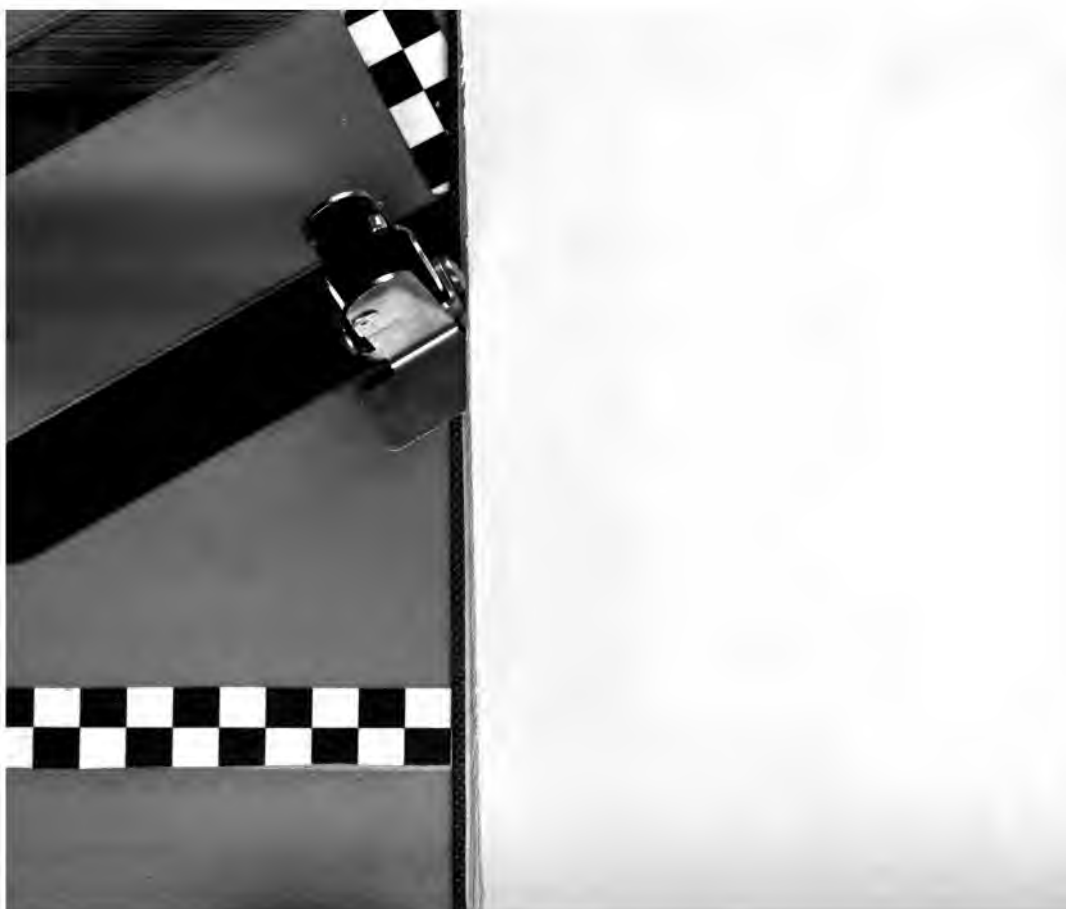
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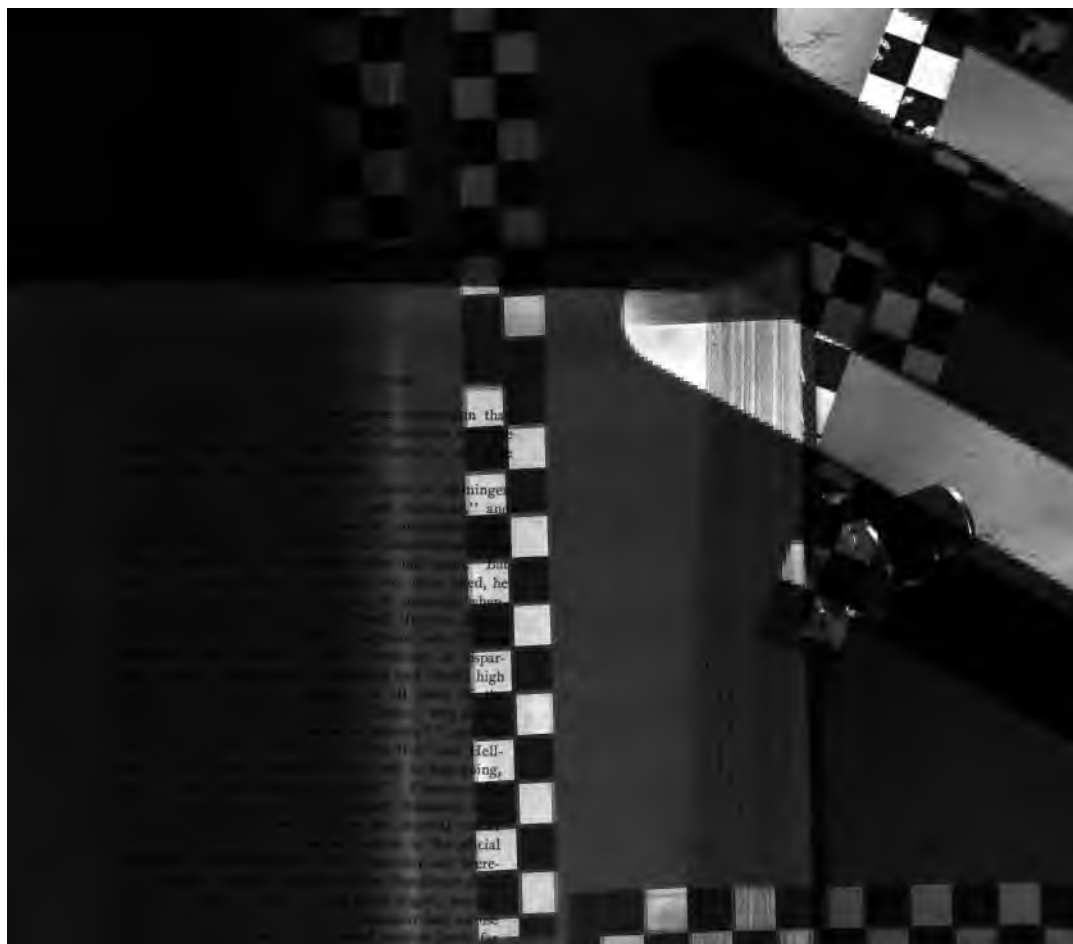
knew the gentleman, said: 'Yes, devilish good company at a stag party. After dinner, when we join the ladies, out with him' (*herausschmeissen*).

A titter went around the table, but His Majesty's glum face suppressed our incipient hilarity.

"Much obliged for the information," he frowned; "but understand, I will not be dictated to in the selection of either a minister or a messenger." Next morning the Kaiser sent straightway for Kiderlen; but the latter, to whom the conversation had been reported by the House-marshal on duty, and who did not care to be snubbed by Bismarck on the eve of his elevation, excused himself on the plea of sickness, adhering to that story for three days in succession, until the Kaiser, losing patience, sent his adjutant, Count Moltke, instead of the Councillor.

Opinion at Court and among serious men generally fully endorsed Bismarck's drastic characterization of the then chief of the official press, afterward Minister to Hamburg, and still later to Denmark, and there are even many who think it applies to all the rest of His Majesty's intimates, the Eulenburgs, Herr von Huelsen, and the cloud of military chums, his adjutants, etc.

"It is a pity," said the Empress Frederick after Count Waldersee's retirement from Berlin (January, 1891), "that my son will have none but lightweights about him; all men of acumen are pushed aside. Still, I suppose I must not grumble so long as Count Herbert is kept out." Her Majesty, you must know, regards Herbert Bismarck as the man who instilled in the Emperor the liking for persons of his—Herbert's—stamp,—flatterers, shallow and insolent, defamers of womankind, tap-house jesters and buffoons. "Scratch either of the Kiderlen-Eulenburg-Huelsen crew and the pickle-herring will appear," she is wont to say,





official press, and as such alternately the scourge of the Kaiser's friends and foes, according to His Majesty's whims. "As the Pooh-Bah of men who missed their vocation," said Bismarck some time ago, "this Suabian chameleon discovered his talent for high politics, and quickly advanced from Minister to a first-rate Free City to that of a fourth-rate kingdom."

Count Philip Eulenburg, whom Princess Charlotte had particularly in mind when speaking of the "out-tricked little charlatans," is likewise somewhat of a letter-writer. When the Kaiser tells an amusing story at table concerning some member of the Court or society in Berlin or some other capital, or gives ill report of officials in the diplomatic service, we say as often "the mail-pouch from Vienna has arrived" as "Kiderlen is at it again." In justice to Count Philli's literary skill, it should be added, however, that his most damatory letters are often least conspicuous for intriguing artifices. When His Excellency has marked down a person as a quarry, he does not go to work with pick and axe, indeed not! Thus, during the year that intervened between Bismarck's Vienna visit and the resignation of Prince Reuss,¹ our Minister in Munich never had anything but words of praise for his "venerable colleague" at the Hofburg; but he was *venerable*, this colleague, and His Grace's "old ailment, that kept him in bed in those momentous days, when he ought to have been away from his post to avoid affording Bismarck a chance to visit the German Embassy, might return at any moment."

¹ Caprivi, acting upon the Kaiser's express orders, had instructed Prince Reuss and the other members of the Embassy to avoid coming into contact, privately or officially, with Prince Bismarck, when the latter attended his son's wedding in Vienna; but Prince Reuss, being ill at the time, received Bismarck at his bedside, it being impossible for him to deny himself.



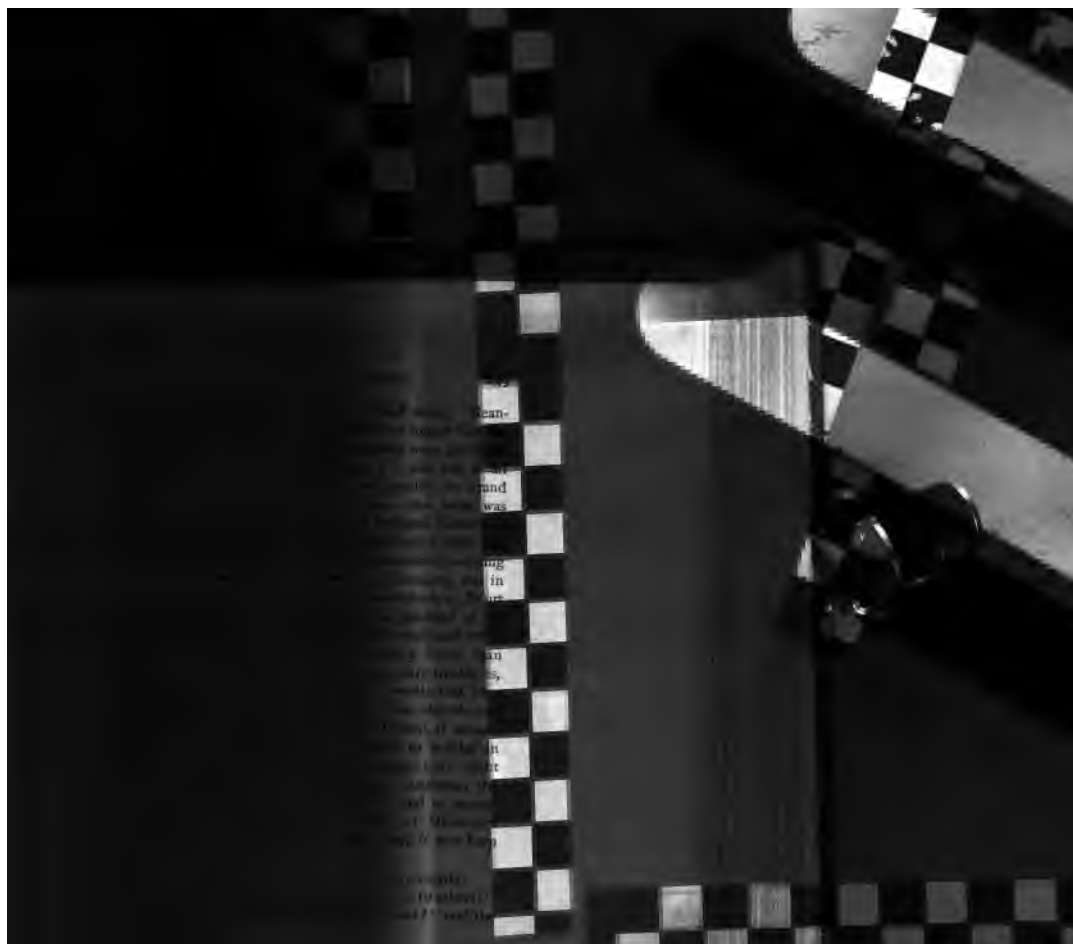


"I beg your Royal Highness's pardon, and His Majesty's too," resumed the nobleman. "I was reckoning with the *l'état-c'est-moi* theory, that insinuates itself into all public business nowadays. To be sure, it's the government that paid, or will pay, respectively, these extra allowances,—twenty-five thousand marks for moving from Darmstadt to Munich, sixty thousand for carting the Minister's furniture from the Isar to the Danube."

Though appearances are against him, Count Eulenburg is not a covetous man, only a poor one, kept poor and made poorer year by year by His Majesty's flattering, but expensive, visits. Like the typical Prussian official, he never had money of his own, and, unlike him, he married a dowerless woman, a de Saudel, of Stockholm, daughter of a Swedish nobleman.

Add to this the expensive habits of Court life, the duty of entertaining the sovereign, and the terrible infliction of having to feed seven hungry youngsters ("so devoted a royalist would never think of having less children, or more, than His Majesty," said Bismarck once), and you get a vague notion of things as they were in the Eulenburg *ménage* before the Vienna windfall. Indeed, as Prussian Minister to Darmstadt, the Count experienced the greatest difficulties in upholding his credit, and the Kaiser's adjutants say that the family, when William had been to dinner or supper, lived off the remnants of the meal for a week or longer. One of these gentlemen assured me that he disliked to accompany His Majesty to Liebenberg and accept hospitality there, because he felt "like robbing a pupillary fund" when dining in a house where so many others, having a better right to the food, went unprovided.

The promotion to the Munich post, together with the excessive allowance for moving, helped Eulenburg momentarily; but until the appointment to Vienna put considerable



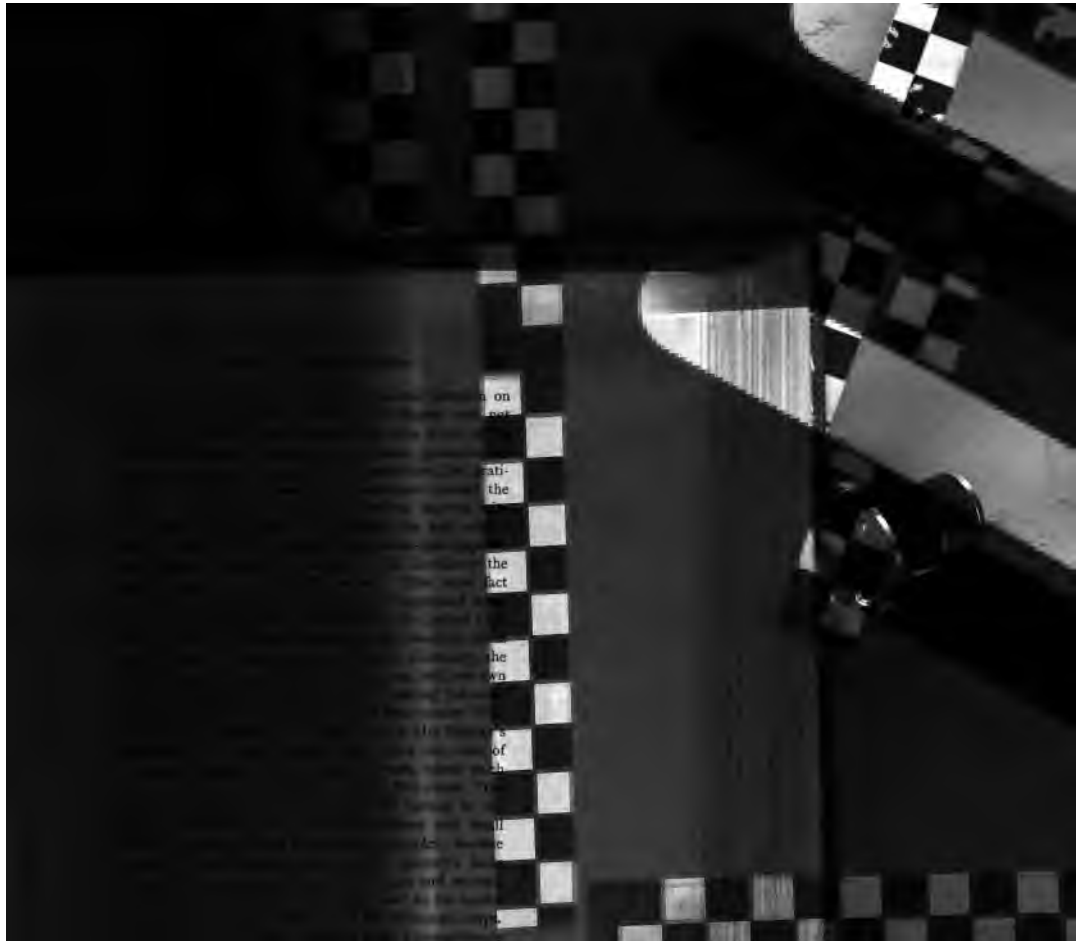


"No," replied the Princess Charlotte,—“for a wonder, there is no Eulenburg present, but the gossips-in-ordinary are,” and Her Royal Highness, raising one of her fair shoulders, pointed to Generals von Hahnke and von Plessen, who, though apparently absorbed in the contemplation of some rich stuffs, which the Sultan had presented to Her Majesty, were taking in the conversation of the august personages, as their confused looks, after this sally, plainly showed.

“Mrs. Meiningen,” seeing the startled faces, burst out laughing, and slapped her knee as her grandmother, the late Empress Augusta, used to do when she was excited.

When this conversation took place, in January, 1893, during the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh, His Majesty and their Highnesses were not on the best of terms, for reasons that will be explained in another chapter.

Eulenburg, however, did not go to the usurer, but selected the safer, though thorny, road: he borrowed from a relative, his sister-in-law, wife of Count Eulenburg, Major in the Guard Dragoons. This lady, belonging to the well-known Berlin family von Schäfer-Voit, is blessed with a considerable fortune in her own right, and allowed herself to be persuaded to provide not only funds for the building and furnishing of an imperial suite of rooms at Count Philli's seat, but, in addition, lent her genial brother-in-law a snug sum, the interest of which was to be exclusively applied to the entertainment of His Majesty. By this arrangement, the Minister's salary was relieved of the incubus that had sucked it dry for the last four or five years, and his family was at last permitted to reap the undivided benefit of his official industry. And (this was common report at the Neues Palais) on condition that she, the commoner, be invited to meet His Majesty twice per year, madame relinquished all claims for interest.



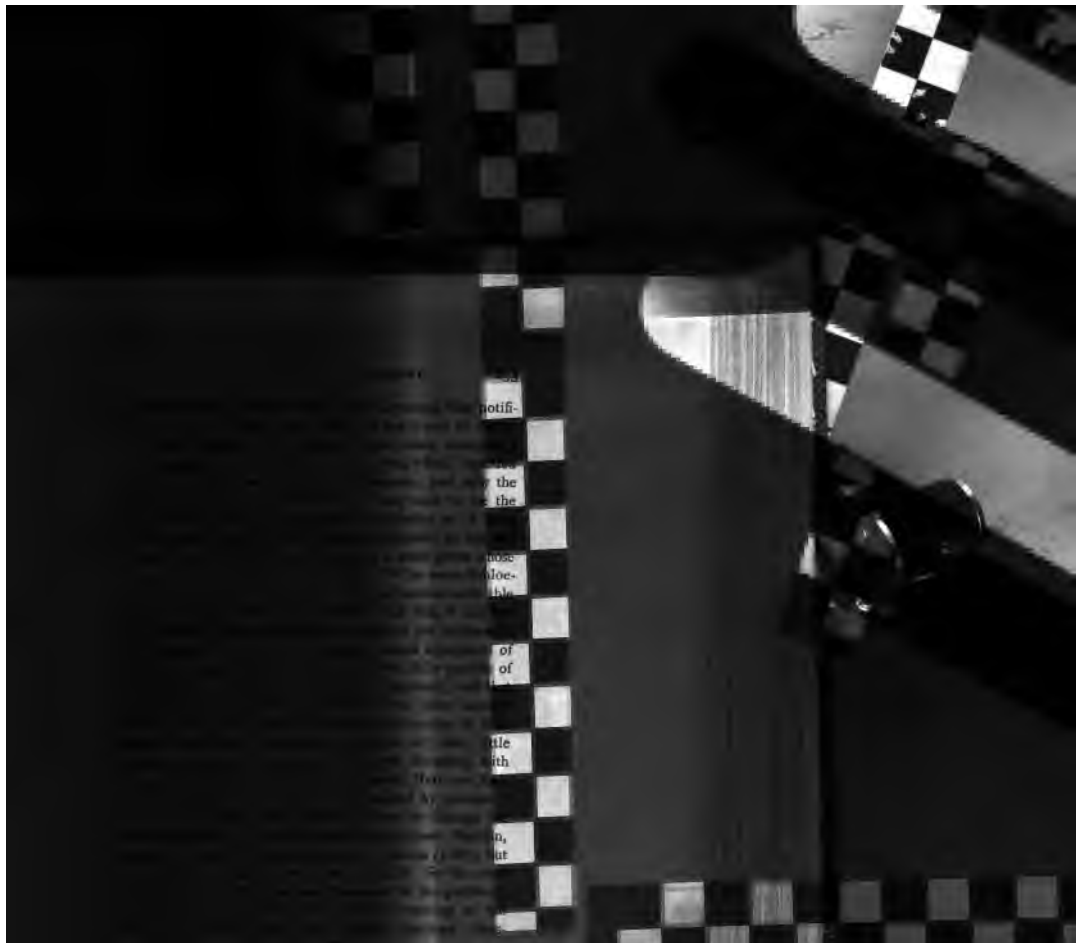


enforced resignation as Ambassador to Russia,—all these “blue letters” bore Eulenburg’s ear-marks, all these resignations and *quasi* resignations were planned and discussed at stag dinners, and during the annual Northland trips, between Frenchy anecdotes and Skalde-songs. Three of the officials named had been on the palace index long before their fall. “Your cousin informs me that Stumm was hand and glove with the ‘Old Thunderbox’” (*Alte Raketenskiste,—Bismarck*) “in Kissingen,” said the Kaiser, on August 9, to the newly-made Minister of the Interior, Count Botho Eulenburg. During His Majesty’s absence in England, Count Philli had kept a strict surveillance over members of the foreign service, and the moment His Majesty set foot in the Neues Palais the most fulsome reports of the doings of all persons suspected of Bismarckian sympathies were handed to him. “This fellow” (Stumm), continued His Majesty, “seems to ignore the publication in the *Reichsanseiger*,¹ and Philli, Kiderlen, and Holstein say there are more of them. Look out for that sort of official in your department; I will have none of them.”

The Court was informed of this conversation by the grand-marshal, who repeated it as a warning to everybody, and from that day on we looked for Baron Stumm’s decapitation every morning in the papers. We did not have to wait long.

The retirement of Herr von Schloezer was likewise a *fait accompli* for us long before that gentleman learned of his dismissal by an article in the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung*, a paper then quite frequently used for *ballons d’essai* and other publications by the resident Prussian Minister, Philip Eulenburg. As it turned out, the matter had been arranged between Kaiser and favorite, and His Majesty

¹ Two rescripts, published July 7, 1892, concerning the attitude German and Prussian Ministers should assume toward Prince Bismarck.





I say this in regret rather than in criticism of His Grace, I assure you; for, while Radolin is insignificant,—his best friend cannot gainsay that,—he is a charming fellow, amiable, polite, obliging, altogether a worthy exponent of virtues that may be said to apply to the Kaiser's friends and companions in general, with the difference, though, that in one or two cases the adjective "insignificant" should be emphasized, while the others must be qualified as "outwardly."

At Court, General von Hahnke, Chief of the Kaiser's Military Cabinet, easily passes as the most trivial man attached to His Majesty's person, either officially or by bonds of friendship, while to General von Plessen, Chief of the Royal Head-quarters, the palm of graceful complaisance is accorded. But before I undertake to define the positions and rights and duties of these two much-talked-of personages, I want to point out that His Majesty appears to be woefully deficient in judging human nature. While there may be method in the selection of mental nonentities for his suite, his attachment to men of doubtful morals and undoubted lack of penetration in general, is explainable only on the ground of his own superficiality. As I never saw the Kaiser, of whose domestic virtues we hear so much, display any interest in his children, save that of examining their clothes as to fit and quality, so he chooses his friends by outside appearances,—a great name and high position being the sole requisites.

William is the only man of royal blood who parades a liking for the profligate Otto of Austria, the second son of Archduke Karl Ludwig, whom the nations of the dual monarchy, fearful of his possible succession to the throne, include in their daily prayers under the head of "Deliver us from all evil." And Count Hoenbroich, the ex-Jesuit, had no sooner started out to fill the penny Jew press with





a check-book issued by a Berlin firm, and wrote out a draft for twenty-five thousand francs.

"Take what is yours," he said, in his grandiloquent way, "and give me the balance." Two days later the managers of the club learned that Visone had just fifty marks to his credit in Berlin, while inquiries at his home developed the fact that he left for parts unknown on the day the fraud was committed.

Compared with a good many of His Majesty's friends, the members of his official household are paragons of virtue, if not of manliness. There is, first of all, Chief of the Royal Head-quarters and Adjutant-General Herr von Plessen, the picture of a proud nobleman, tall and muscular, with grayish blonde hair and ditto moustache, large, kind blue eyes, and courtly manners, "just such a man as I would select by the dozen for my cabinet, if I were a Catherine of Russia," said one of the Emperor's sisters to me one evening, in a burst of confidence.

"But His Excellency is nearly fifty."

"He was not born so old, and, besides, it would mean that he has a son or sons between the ages of twenty-five or thirty."

Well, Plessen is no Grigori Orloff, hardly an Alexei¹ in respect to influence over the sovereign; a splendid lay-figure, gorgeously accoutred with a wealth of glittering orders and ribbons of many hues, he seems to be more and more degenerating into a solemn complier! "Yet," says the voice of the palace, where everybody sympathizes with the reputed lover of a fair Princess ("Sister Lottchen"),—

¹ Count Orloff was the celebrated paramour of Catherine II; his brother Alexei, who aided in the conspiracy to enthrone her by strangling Czar Peter III with his own hands (he lived till 1808), was soon discarded as a favorite and banished from Court.



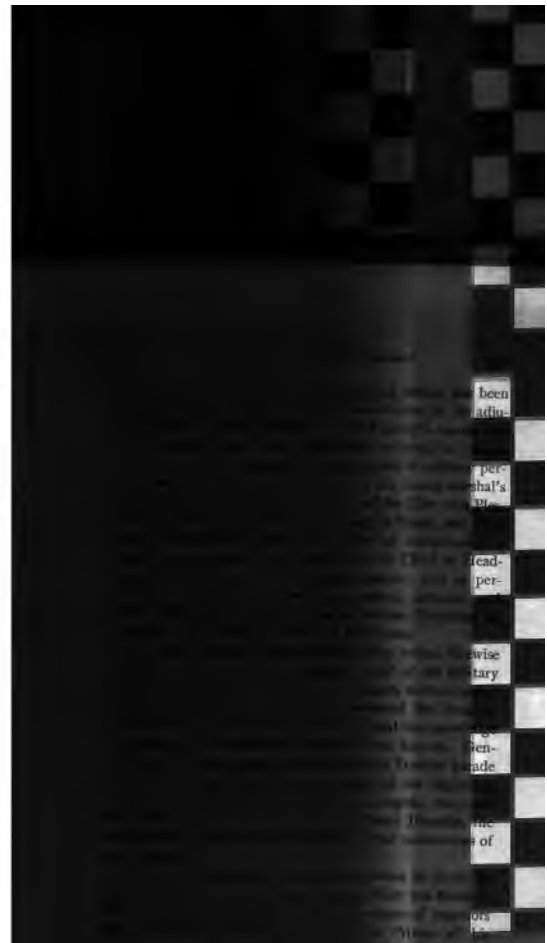


mentioned the matter. Possibly the case of Count Waldersee frightened him, as it did others. Like von Plessen, the Emperor's uncle by marriage is a better military leader than the war-lord, but was incautious enough to let it out; hence his enforced residence in the dirty Altona-Krähwinkel. The new chief of head-quarters had come to the capital to stay, and with that end in view did not hesitate to turn himself into a nought as an officer and as a man.

Alas and alack! how your paradise-conquering Baron Trenck of a decade ago has changed into a meek pot-boiler, royal Princess! Though still a type of splendid manhood, it is scarcely possible to recognize the daring lover of an Emperor's daughter in the von Plessen of to-day, in that smooth-tongued courtier content to see and to be seen, to answer when he is spoken to, and who, to cloak the absolute want of employment his great title covers, does odd jobs that one of the House-marshals, a flunky, or courier might perform as well.

Time and again have I seen the chief of head-quarters come from the Kaiser's cabinet with an air of importance that indicated business of the greatest consequence, while it developed later on that the Kaiser had commissioned him to procure a new novel, or some pamphlet, or look at a horse offered for sale. Indeed, this amiable *sabretasche* is glad to concern himself with his master's most trivial affairs to while away the time that hangs heavily upon his hands, for, strictly speaking, he has nothing whatever to do, save to wait upon His Majesty once every twenty-four hours and receive for his trouble an invitation for lunch or dinner, or an order to hold himself in readiness for a journey, a hunting-trip, or some festival.

That the Kaiser abolished one of the principal duties of the chief of head-quarters, that of keeping the monarch



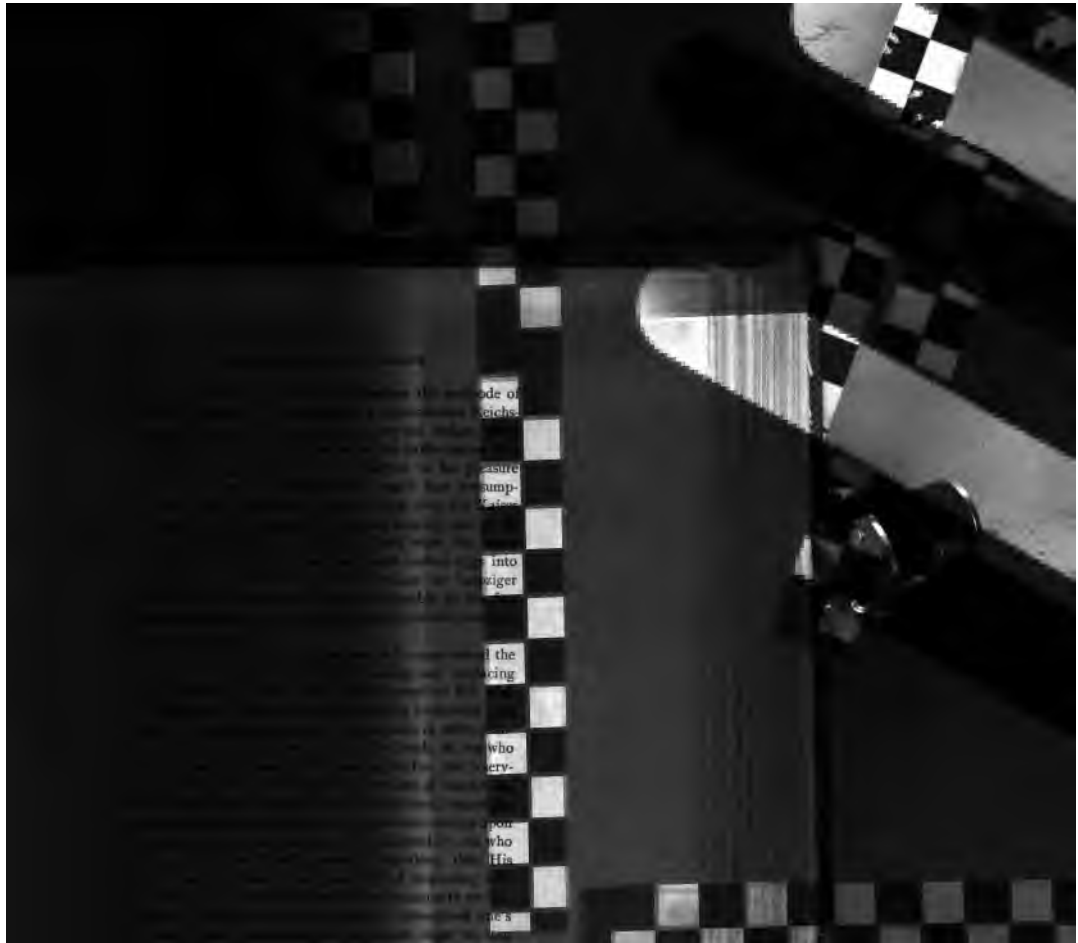


We see a great deal of Herr von Hahnke at Court, and a more propitious and obliging gentleman never breathed the air of a palace. His tact is proverbial and his devotion to the Emperor a by-word in upper society, which credits him with selecting for a device on the *Graf's* escutcheon, which William promised him, the words: "The King's will is my highest law."

"The King's will!" That such a thing exists in Prussia has been doubted time and again since Frederick the Third's death; its existence as a continuity for, let us say, twice twelve hours at least, is denied by the Kaiser's own acts almost daily, but we courtiers know better. For my part, I think the observation of how much of a slave William is to his momentary purposes makes those nearest him obey even his most evanescent notions! And where a Plessen silently submits, how much easier must it be for a Hahnke to listen and report, set people against each other, and keep *mum*!

These qualities helped to obtain for an indifferent colonel, such as he was, the gilded shoulder-knots of a brigadier of the Guards, and, glossing over his flagrant exhibitions of tactical ignorance, pushed him into the most influential post at Court, and kept him there year in, year out, *semper Augustus*, as many knowing persons claim.

No wonder Herr von Hahnke is sneered at by those who fear him most,—army men possessing, besides rank and position, strategic knowledge of a superior order. No wonder the battalions of generals, deposed on motion of the Military Cabinet, in late years, named him "Corporal Guillotine." This man, with a contortionist's backbone and the flexibility of neck-muscles of a nodding mandarin,—if the real ones are anything like the China figures,—beats them all, being at once the source and the echo of the war-lord's volition. Under Herr von





"I am willing to bet that a good many heads fell into the basket this morning," said Duke Günther of Schleswig to my mistress one day, toward the end of the fourth week in January, 1891. His Highness was standing at one of the windows of the Pillar Room in the Berlin Schloss, following with his eyes the Kaiser, who had just entered his hunting-gig in the company of General von Hahnke.

"What makes you think so, Günther?" asked the Empress, with an expression of astonishment on her still pale face. Auguste Victoria, you must know, had only recently left the *Wochenbett*¹ to prepare for the Kaiser's birthday festival, then approaching.

"Corporal Guillotine—I beg Your Majesty's pardon, the Sword-bearer of the Lord High Executioner—looks so devilish sly this morning. I reckon the Hahnkes will have golden stars and spurs instead of pigs' knuckles with their sour-cROUT to-day."

All of us laughed at the Duke's sally, for the chief of cabinet's penurious *ménage* is notorious. "If I were only sure that you could keep a secret," Her Majesty resumed after a while,—and my mistress and her brother began to talk together in subdued voices.

Two days later the "secret" was in everybody's mouth: The Kaiser had offered the command of the Ninth Corps to Count Waldersee when the latter appeared to congratulate him on his birthday. This meant, of course, that the incumbent of the office, General von Leszczynski, was to be shelved. *His* head had fallen into the basket that morning,—not "a good many," as His Highness suspected; but then Leszczynski was worth a good many small-fry generals, to Herr von Hahnke at least, for His

¹ Prince Joachim was born on December 17, 1890, being the first of the imperial children to see the light in the Berlin Schloss.



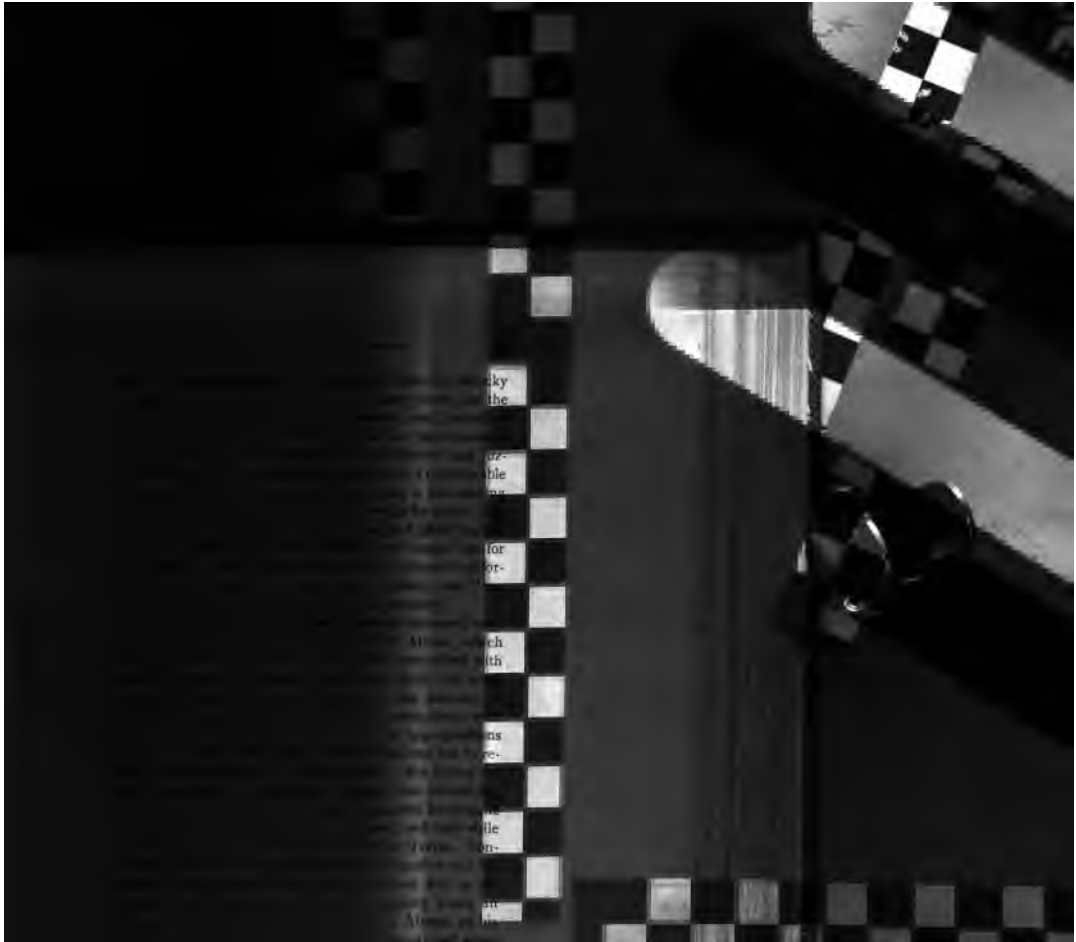


"I resume where my comrade left off," drawled the Duke. "Well, then, my authority regards as the worst part of the whole business that in a good many instances the all-highest remarks are not even fully understood, and that Hahnke is *too much of a courtier* to ask His Majesty to repeat a word or two, or to explain the meaning of his monosyllables. Thus many a brave fellow has been undone while a corresponding number of drones were smuggled into fat places. But, of course," added His Highness, observing an ugly look on Prince Bernhard's face, "Hahnke could not do anything to hurt *you*."

"No," growled Meiningen, "not while I am about." Shortly afterward, His Highness severed all connection with the Court, a circumstance which gave the Military Cabinet the desired opportunity to live up to Prince Bernhard's expectations, just recorded. He was forced to resign, and so was Duke Günther, for that matter, while three more Bismarck adherents, generals of acknowledged ability, their Excellencies Herren von Schlichting, von Blume, and von Spitz, kept the pair company. The dismissals, resignations, and removals of less conspicuous men continue unabated, year in, year out.

That His Highness of Schleswig's allusions to royal signatures surreptitiously obtained to make room for drones are well founded is evident from the fact that twice in succession obsolete positions have been revived to afford berths for some of Herr von Hahnke's relatives.

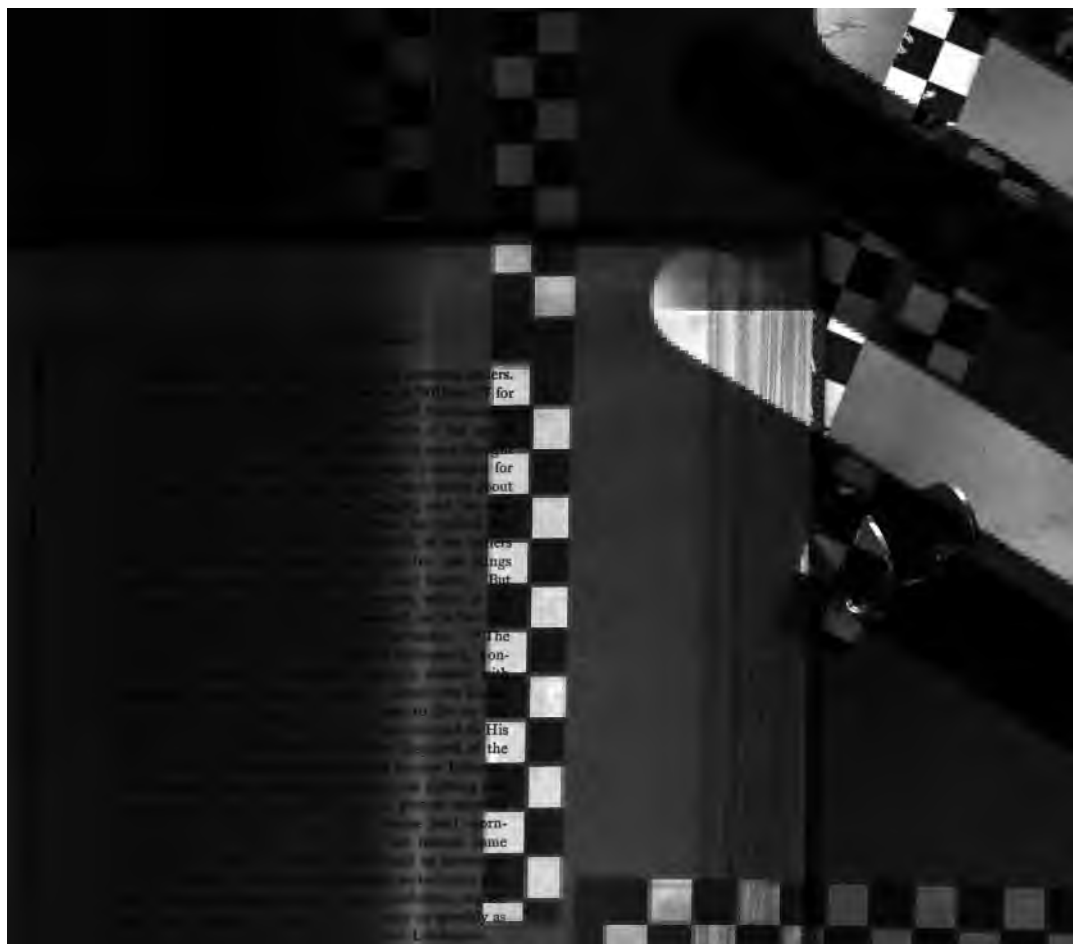
First, there was General von Müller, brigadier of the Guards, who made an ass of himself during the manoeuvres of 1893 and was marked for dismissal in consequence, the commander of his corps not only blacklisting His Excellency, but insisting upon his immediate removal. Now, Müller happens to be von Hahnke's cousin, and bets stood ten to one in the palace that the blue letter would sooner





was very much occupied on account of the visit of the Prince of Naples, signed the paper without further ado. The ado developed next spring, when the Reichstag looked into the matter and refused to grant the appointee's pay. The debates on this subject were many and pointed, and both Kaiser and Hahnke were severely criticised, until, finally, Bronsart von Schellendorf, by a daring and masterful speech, persuaded Parliament that Herr von Schleinitz must be retained. Needless to say, the Reichstag knew nothing of the relationship existing between Herr von Hahnke and Generals von Schleinitz and von Muller.

Such a service, rendered in the hour of distress, not willingly, it is true, but by the Kaiser's express orders (the negotiations to this end were long, and often on the point of discontinuance, as I was told at the time),—the deliverance from the Reichstag's wrath,—would have placed any other man under lasting obligations; not so the chief of the Military Cabinet, who, to retain his influence and, indeed, his head, must hold himself ready to do his master's bidding without consulting his own likes and dislikes, scruples or sympathies. In the course of the next year, the Kaiser tired of his Minister of War, and Herr von Hahnke was intrusted with the task of procuring His Excellency's resignation, the proposed new military code, advocated by Bronsart, being the point of issue. This matter was to come to a head at the Letzlingen hunt in December, 1895, the then Minister of the Interior, Herr von Koeller, having engaged himself to take the initiative. Accordingly, that gentleman appeared at the hunting-box in a state of great mental distress, as House-marshal von Egloffstein, on duty in Letzlingen, told us. So nervous and so absent-minded was Koeller that His Majesty joked him about it, and suggested he better postpone his debut with the tell-tale loving-cup. This, by the way, is an

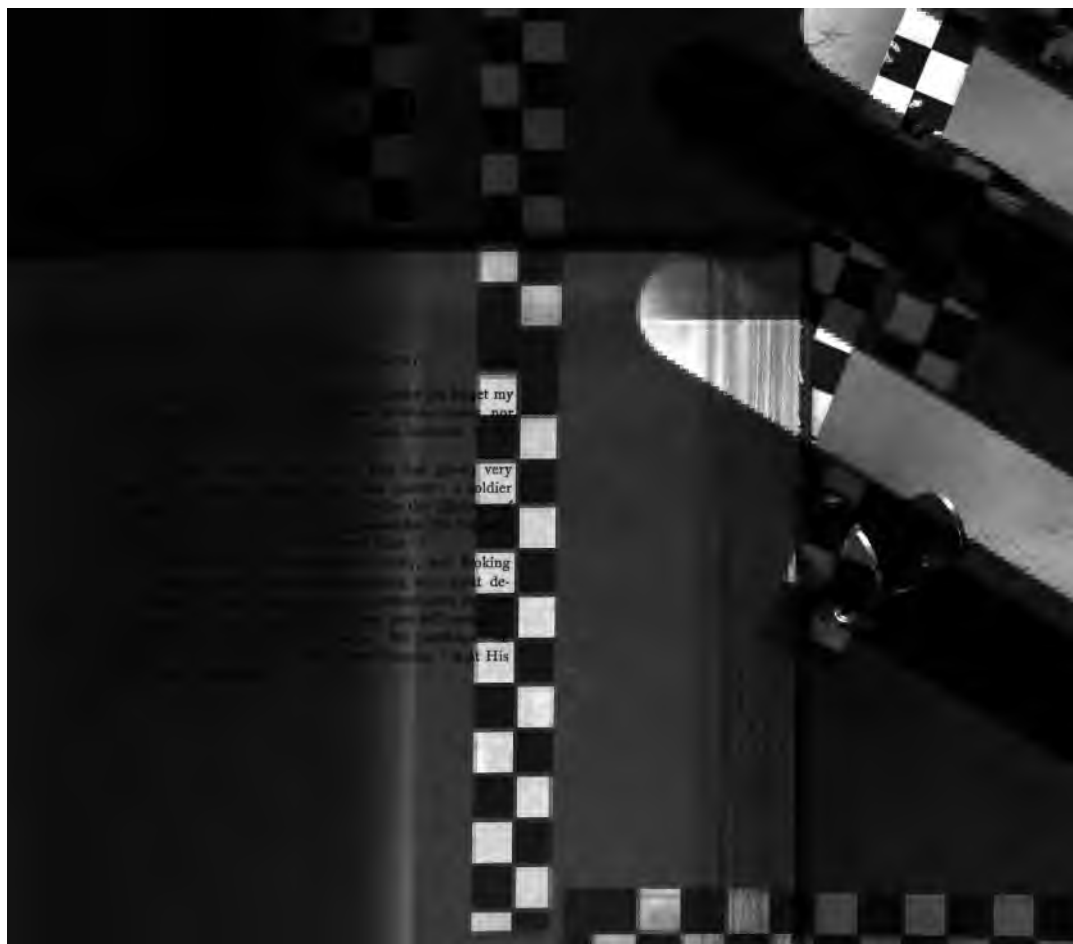




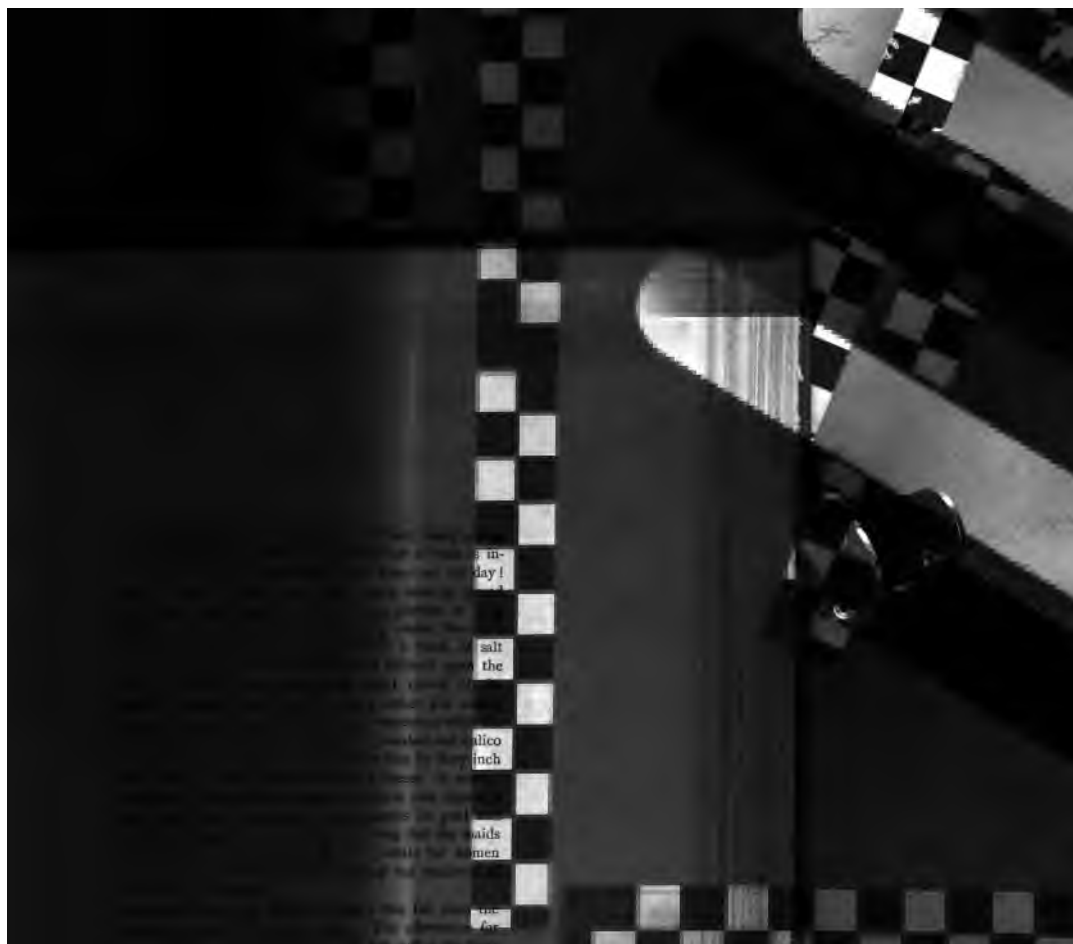
and myself were trying to entertain the sovereign lady; and hardly had the door closed behind us when His Majesty's voice rang out with cutting denunciations of the Chancellor, so that the grand-mistress ordered the ante-chamber cleared. After supper, the Empress told us His Majesty had decided to ignore the crisis, and would set out on another hunting expedition without delay, while Herr von Koeller was to take a furlough. "The differences between Uncle Chlodwig and the Minister of the Interior may be adjusted after all," suggested our mistress. They were not, however, and Koeller's temporary retirement became permanent after a little while.

These tactics having failed, others still more despicable were put into operation. The Military Cabinet, as already mentioned, placed a number of spies in the War office, and removed the Minister's foremost co-workers to other parts of the country. Yet Bronsart would neither resign, nor give up the fight for the code, until, finally, late in 1896, the *camarilla* hit upon an infallible plan for dislodging him, viz.: by persuading the Emperor to order Bronsart to advocate the fortification of several towns on the Russian frontier. Furthermore, His Majesty demanded that certain funds, reserved for other purposes, be used to keep the barracks of the Neues Palais garrisoned all the year round, while the existing appropriations limit the stay of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion to eight months only. As foreseen, Herr von Bronsart refused to accept responsibilities of that kind, and withdrew with flying colors. These were the last words exchanged between the war-lord and the Minister of War, Herr von Bronsart, according to the report of an ear-witness in whom I place the utmost confidence:

"And if I command," roared the Emperor,—“if I command you to advocate those fortifications and cause the retention of the battalion at my palace?”









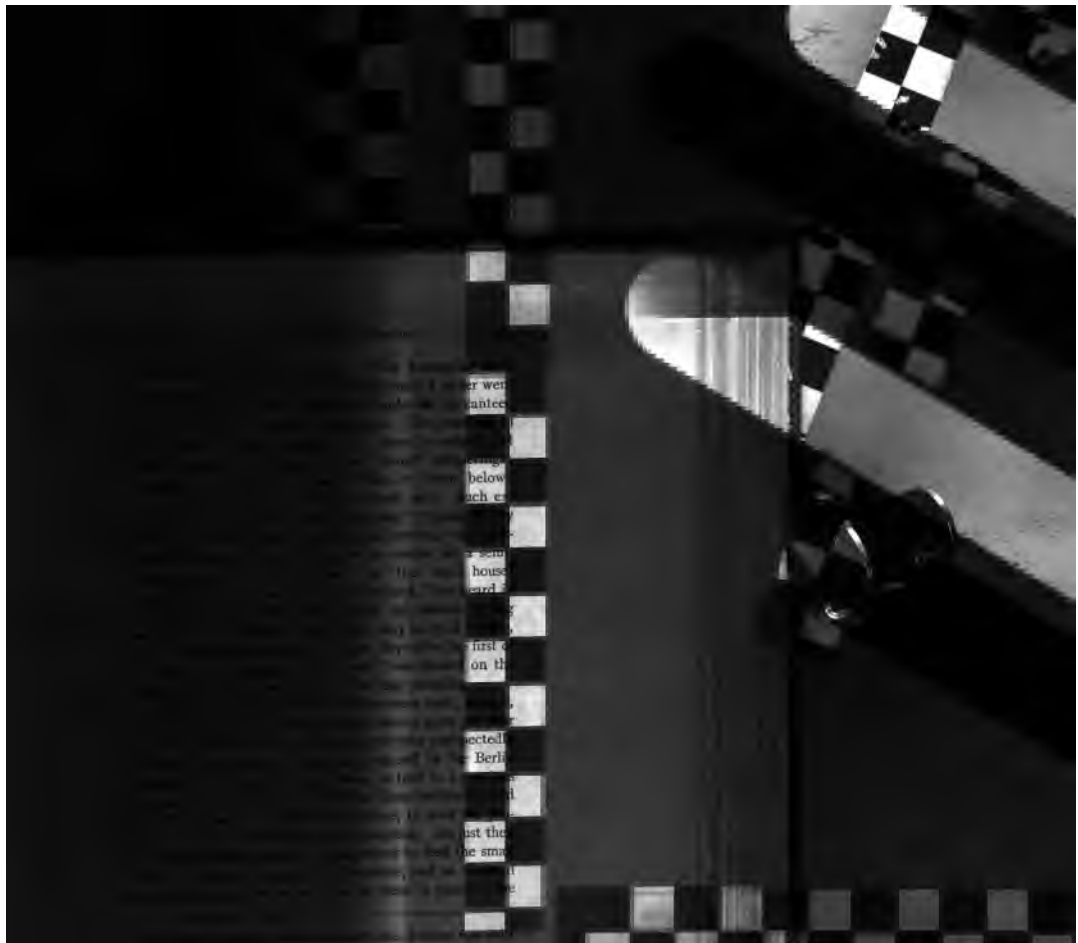
courses are hurried to cover up the shortening of rations, and frequently some of the visitors are "skipped" as if by accident. Of the royal guests, many leave the flower-strewn table as hungry as the scrub-girls do their nooks and corners after the noon recess.

The women hail from Potsdam or the surrounding villages, and work in the castle from 6 A.M. to 6 or 8 P.M., many walking an hour or more to and from their destination. They are employed in the apartments of the adjutants, of the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, in the servants' quarters, and in the kitchens, at cleaning and scrubbing, wood and water carrying, etc., but our two-hundred-room palace affords neither a place where they may cook a scanty meal nor a room where they can eat and rest.

"They get their wages,—what more do they want?" answer the House-marshals, when we ladies pity the unfortunates, and we have to subside for fear that those we try to befriend may in consequence lose their livelihood—such as it is—under the protecting wing of the imperial eagle.

"They have their wages,"—two marks, fifty cents, per day for twelve or fourteen hours' work, and even in the coldest winter—the Court seldom removes to Berlin before Christmas—cannot get a cup of coffee or a plate of soup from the crowned master, though it is self-evident that none of the women have time to go home for dinner during recess.

A person of my rank runs against this class of servants on rare occasions only; but accident leads me into the lower regions of the palace once in a while, and it gives me a shock every time to see these Pariahs of our splendid Court fighting hunger and cold with food devoid of warmth, behind doors and staircases where the wind whistles the





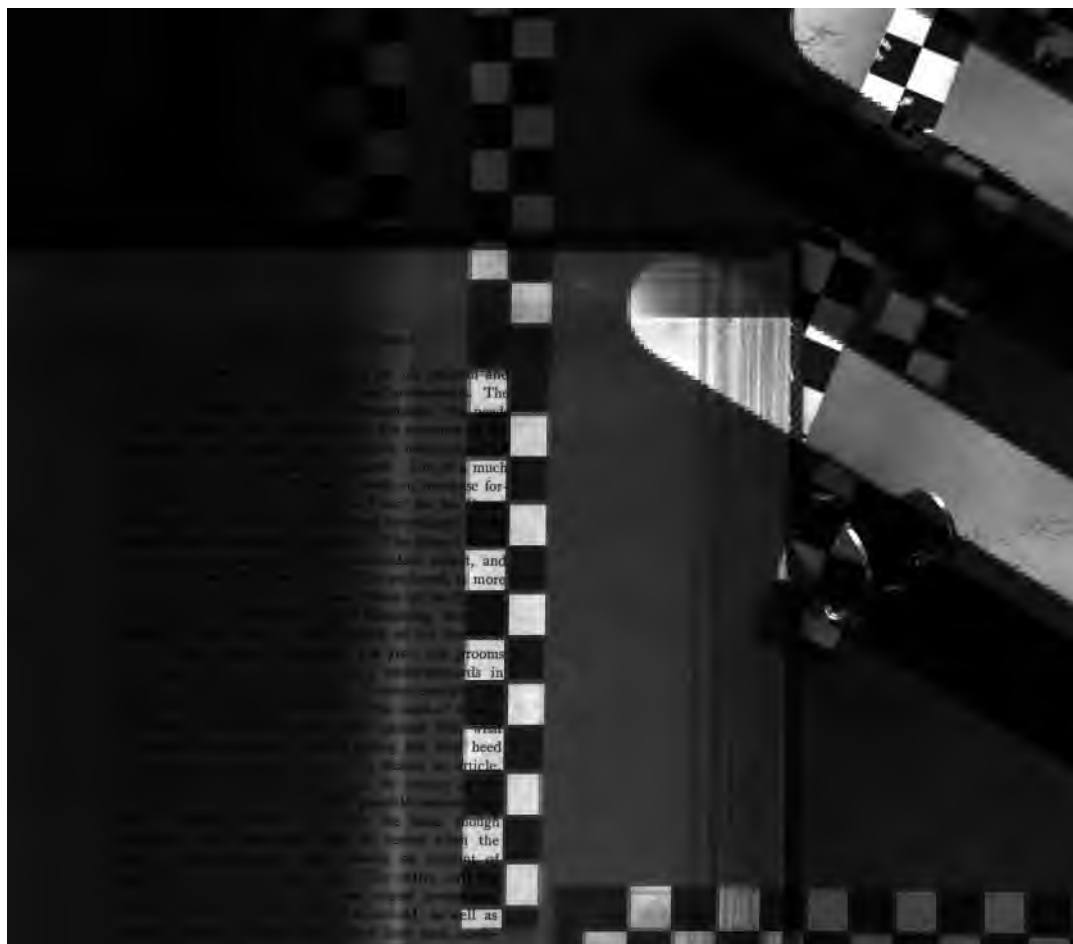
regulation dinner of meat, vegetables, and potatoes. When the horny-handed sons of toil first made the acquaintance of anchovy paste, salmon, caviare, potted turkey, imported cheeses and the like, they were overjoyed; but the aristocratic menu palled on them after a few days, and while vociferating for the homely potato, they roundly abused the luxuries "for which they paid exorbitant taxes." The stewards, who gave out the food, were scoffed at and insulted as "dudes," and when Herr von Lyncker tried to remonstrate with the men, they threatened to send one of their dinners into the Socialist camp of the Reichstag. So the House-marshal had to dive into his pocket and reinstate the old bill of fare, while the hospitals received the *beaux restes* of the demolished buffets.

Scenes and incidents of this description, far from being exceptional, are of such frequent occurrence at the Court of the German Emperor, that the ladies and gentlemen of the service have long ceased to notice them.

"But how is it possible?" asks the reader whose "Statesman's Year-Book" tells him that the Emperor has an income of nearly sixteen millions of marks, or about four million dollars per year, and who remembers, perchance, William's boastful speech in which he said he was the biggest land-owner in the Empire.

Whether the latter assertion is true I cannot say, but the sixteen millions are a chiming reality and unencumbered, save for the obligation to pay five appanages of fifteen thousand dollars each per annum to Prussian Princes. That leaves William about three million nine hundred thousand dollars a year to "bless himself with," besides his private income of one hundred and fifty thousand marks (thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars) per month.

These thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars form the nucleus of His Majesty's privy purse, and are always





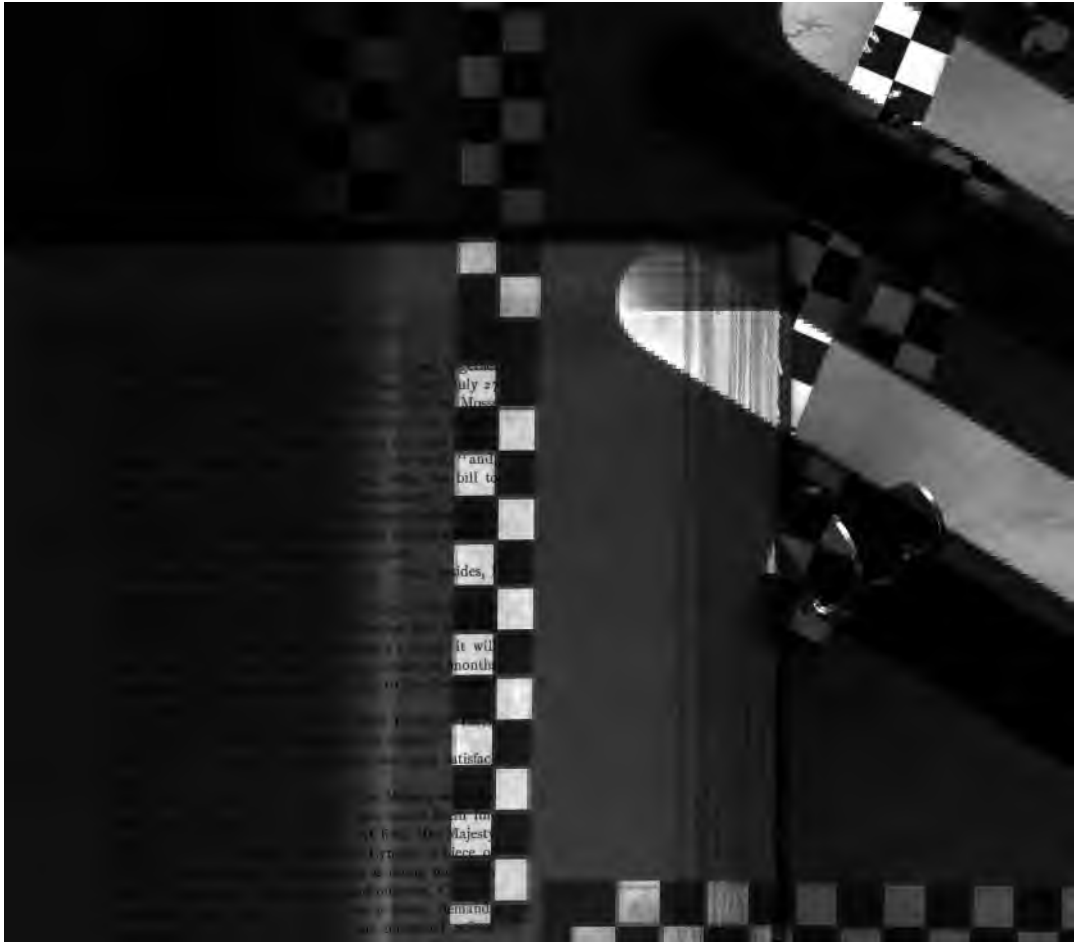
discredits the Kaiser's name with merchants and everybody else having business with the Court.

I had noticed for some time that a certain dealer in flowers, a *Hoflieferant* of *Unter den Linden*, served me with excessive zeal, though my purchases were not extensive by any means. My carriage no sooner stopped at his door, when this man rushed out bowing and scraping, and adding to my titles some I never dare hope to acquire. I also observed that he charged me less than the prices marked. So one day I asked him the reason. "Your Ladyship belongs to the Court."

"But," I said, "others do, and I have seen the carriage of my colleague, Madame the Countess von B——, halt a considerable time in front of your store before one of the employees came to ask her pleasure."

"*Gnädige Gräfin*," said the florist, "if I may say so, you belong to the Court and *pay cash*. For that reason I would rather sell you a three-mark bouquet than a fifty-mark flower-piece to the lady you mention or" (and he lowered his voice) "to even the Emperor or Empress. I am a well-to-do man, thank the Lord; but when it comes to waiting a year and a half before one's bills are paid by the royal treasury, I feel like cursing my appointment. And the worst of it is, the all-highest example is followed by almost everybody connected with the Court."

But nothing illustrates the unsettled state of the royal finances more thoroughly than the fact that Her Majesty has no certain income of her own. Her Court-marshal is obliged to fight for every Thaler required beyond the ordinary pay of servants and help, with the Kaiser's Court and House marshals, who often refuse to grant necessary funds until Her Majesty's express commands compel them to honor the disputed bills. A rather amusing incident of that sort happened a few months after the enthronization,





Lyncker's drawer was all at once alive with crisp blue bills, and there was no higher pleasure for him in the wide, wide world than to discharge obligations for the "all-highest children." As to his remarks that the cradle was good enough for the baby, they were mere pleasantries, and he was "amazed that Her Ladyship should have taken them for anything else," etc. But the above is really a very extravagant example of the difficulties of our household exchequer. We have experienced even more fuss about such items as ink or sealing-wax for Her Majesty's writing-table and paper for the linen-presses.

At the one memorable visit Her Majesty paid to her linen-presses (she has been heralded as an exemplary housewife ever since) the Kaiserin observed that the linen was deposited on the bare shelves, and asked Fräulein Kubou what it meant.

"May it please Your Majesty," courtesied the keeper, who was probably eager to get even with her superior, "I have repeatedly asked for paper, but Count Pückler says he has no funds for such luxuries."

"Luxuries," repeated the Kaiserin, "luxuries where my body-linen lies!" and turning to Madame von Larisch, Superintendent of the Royal Household, she said: "See to it that paper of the very best quality is purchased this very hour, and if the House-marshal interferes, advise me."

Armed with this all-highest authority, Baroness von Larisch bought several marks' worth of blue paper, and sent them to Fräulein Kubou, but the servant returned with the astonishing information that the woman dared not accept the material, as the stamp of the chief Court-marshal's office was lacking. "Nonsense," said the dame of the household to the servant; "tell the keeper I command her to place the paper in the presses at once and have no more words about it." Five minutes later, Fräulein





increased, His Majesty having been pleased to sleep in his own room several times of late, which means twelve extra sheets, according to the last accounting."

The House-marshal to Baron von Mirbach, Chief Court-marshal of Her Majesty: "Will you oblige this office by paying the enclosed bill, which Her Majesty herself audited? We have no appropriations for such extras."

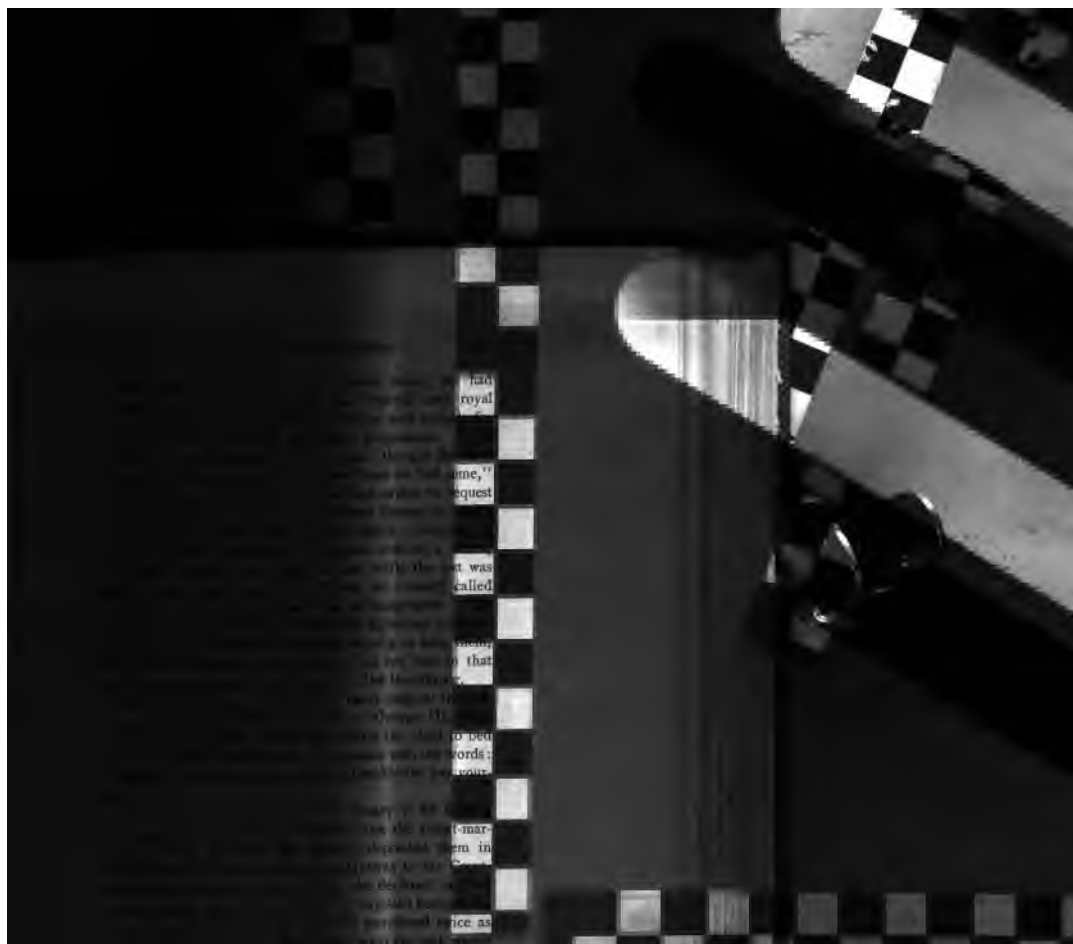
Baron von Mirbach to Baron von Lyncker (privately): "You ask me to create a dangerous precedent, *mon cher*. I answer: 'No, thanks! Not in the *la main*.'"¹

The House-marshal to Privy-Councillor Miessner, Keeper of the Privy Purse (*Schatulle*): "There are no appropriations out of which the enclosed bill can be paid, and no surplus funds in any of the departments. You will therefore report the case to His Majesty, and get his all-highest authorization for payment. As the enclosures show, Her Majesty herself graciously ordered the purchase of the material."

Eight sheets of foolscap paper, emblazoned with crests and garnished with stamps and the most illegible signatures, and crammed with officious language in lapidary style,—all about sixty-two cents and a half! Of course, there would have been just as much fuss if the object had been the fraction of a cent.

That the contents of the linen-presses are entirely unequal to the demands has already been mentioned. So it happened that, in the winter of 1893, Frau Heiner, then in charge of the Princes, sent to Fräulein Kubou for six small spreads, explaining that the children were now too old to take afternoon naps, and that she wanted spreads to cover their beds in day-time "so that they look decent when anybody comes to inspect the nursery." Fräulein Kubou

¹ French *moi*, *en vogue* in Berlin.





well established, that Count Eulenburg got scared and promised to take care of the bill, which, like the one aforementioned, travelled for weeks from department to department before a settlement could be secured.

When it is remembered that "the difficulties of the exchequer" occasionally interfere with the Kaiser and Kaiserin's predilection for cleanliness,—I recall the fact that their Majesties are sometimes unable to obtain clean sheets for their bed,—the statement that the royal servants, men and women, are kept exceedingly short in respect to towels and bedclothes will surprise no one. As a matter of fact, the allowance for the first-named article is two per week; the bed-linen is changed every month. And at the same time the liveried retainers are supposed to be paragons of cleanliness!

One evening, when we were talking in Her Majesty's dressing-room of the vagaries of Prince Frederick Leopold, the Countess Bassewitz remarked that His Royal Highness compelled his valets and the chasseur, which latter serves him at table, to bathe two or three times a day, morning, noon, and night; that is, always before they come into personal contact with him.

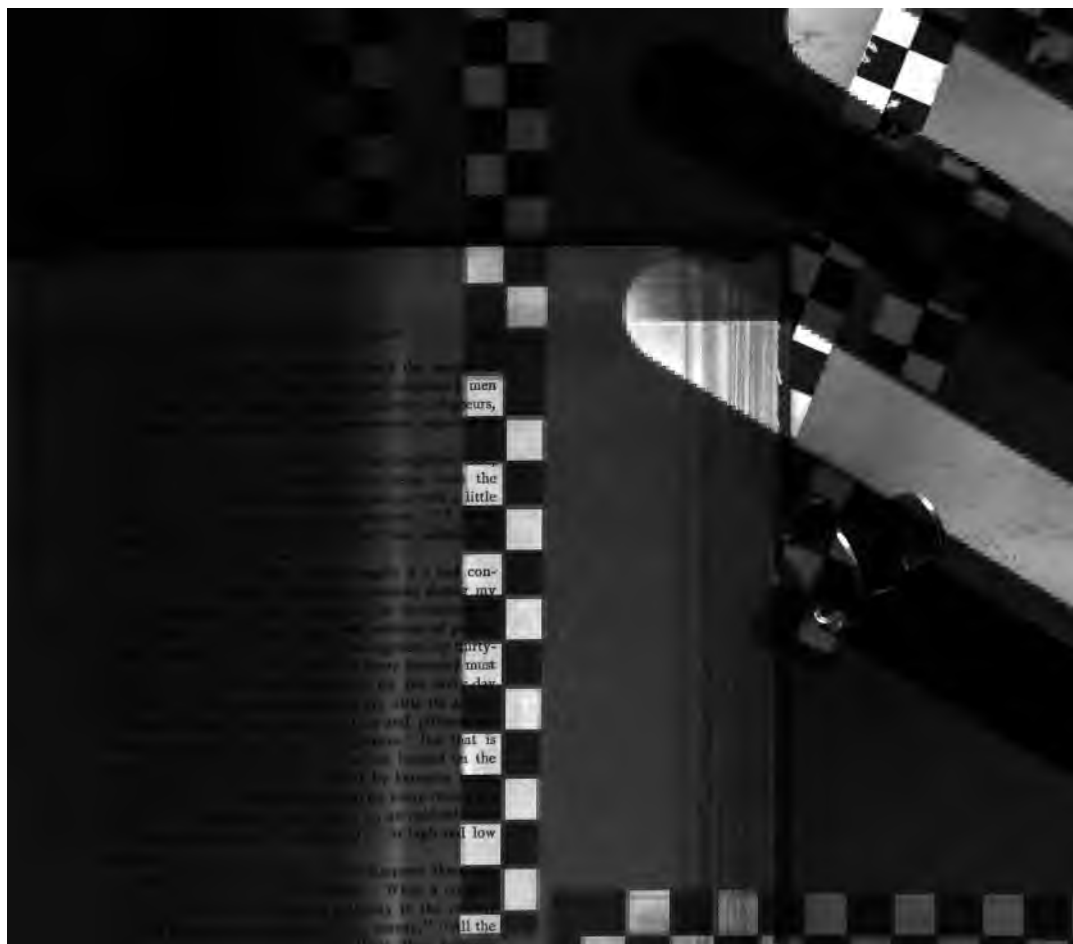
"That is extravagant," said Her Majesty; "but persons of our rank cannot insist too strongly upon the daily bath for their attendants."

"If there are enough bath-rooms!" I could not resist the temptation to throw out this hint.

"Well," said the Kaiserin, "I suppose there is a sufficient number in *our* palaces, at least here and in the Schloss."

"I beg Your Majesty's pardon," I spoke up; "here, as well as in Berlin, we have but two bath-rooms for servants,—one for the men, one for the women."

The Empress gave me a startled look. "Two bath-rooms?" she gasped.

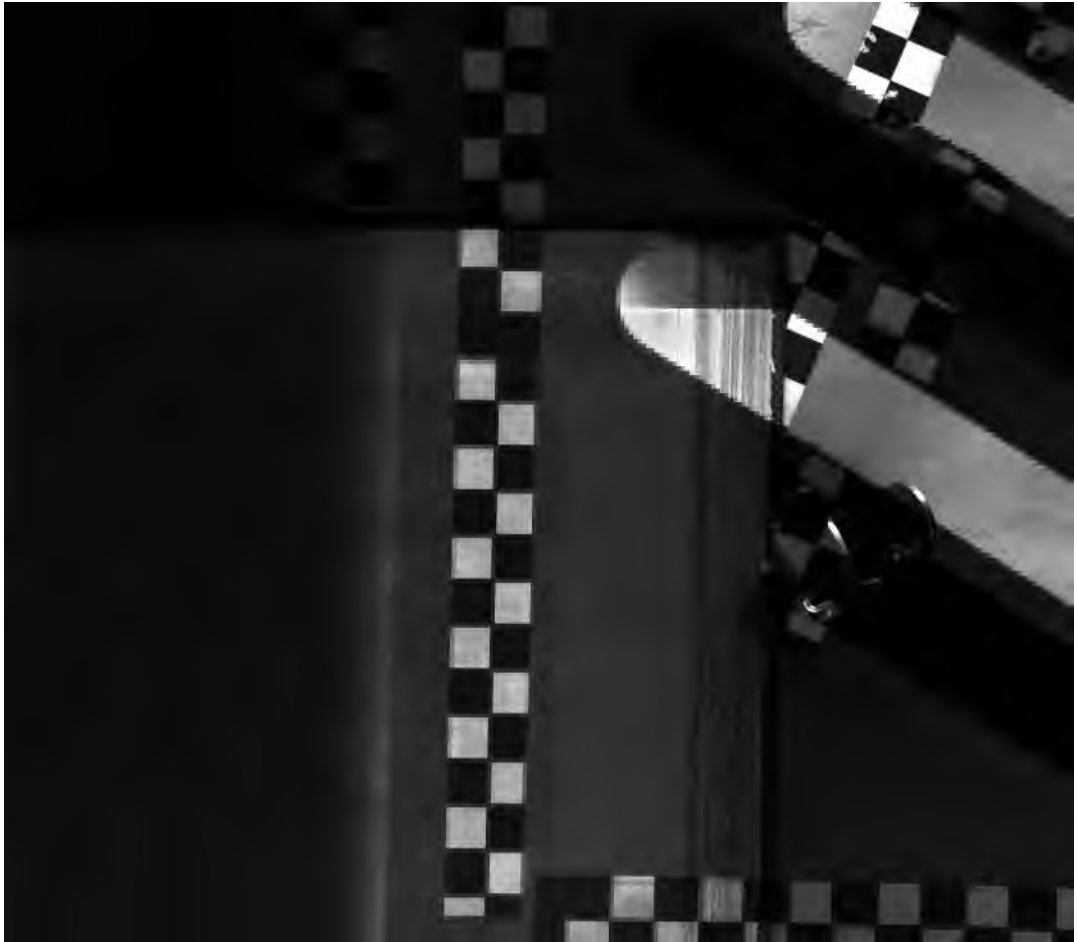




family? So far as the money is not mortgaged beforehand or absorbed by the expenses for travelling, entertaining, Her Majesty's toilets, the building craze and other crazes, the expenses of the Court or Courts swallow them. The Berlin Schloss, you must know, is always kept ready for immediate occupancy, all servants being at their posts and all fires lit. "See the ogre that devoured twenty-five millions!" were the damnatory words hurled at Marie Antoinette and her fat husband as the royal chariot rolled into Paris on October 6, 1789, "escorted by hunger and rascality."

Twenty-five millions!—fuel for the revolution of the end of the eighteenth century, but not a patch on the expenses of the German Court of to-day! Since William II came to the throne, the Prussian people have paid one hundred and sixty millions of marks into the civil list, and of these, one hundred millions were expended to keep up the pageant of superficial splendor that goes to make the Court. For one thing, the salary list is enormous, not on account of many-noughted items as much as because of its prodigious length. There are, altogether, some fifteen hundred persons on it, fully two-thirds of whom have to be clothed and fed, as well as paid. The great officials are not provided with uniforms or dress, it is true, but receive very considerable allowances for that purpose, and also table-money, if for some reason or other they are not invited to or stay away from the meals. All the employees, moreover, are entitled to mileage and board fees if taken on a junketing. To illustrate, I append the remuneration of some of the high officials, and of their Majesties' body-attendants.

The grand-masters of both Kaiser and Kaiserin and the several House-marshals receive thirty thousand marks per year salary, live in royal villas rent free, and carriages and





I reported what I had heard to Countess Brockdorff. "It is only too true," said Her Excellency. "I have repeatedly remonstrated with Count Eulenburg on that account, but one cannot squeeze blood from a stone, you know. I am ashamed to admit it, but we cannot get along without these forced loans while the exchequer is overburdened. But I think the marshal's office might be more discriminating in *choosing* its creditors. Only single men and girls should be sent on journeys, for the supposition is that they have a little money put aside. The salary of the married people is usually spent during the first week after pay-day, and if ordered away, they have to borrow to get to the place of destination."

Under Herr von Liebenau it once happened that the royal attendants received an advance on their mileage and travelling expenses; namely, when their Majesties, then Prince and Princess William, accompanied by an immense suite, went to the Queen's Jubilee. By this bit of non-Prussian liberality hangs a tale. No sooner had the Court returned to Potsdam than Herr von Liebenau demanded a strict accounting of the moneys disbursed, and, by applying the most niggardly estimate on each and every item, he succeeded in unravelling numerous instances of "extravagance." These servants—think of it!—had eaten English breakfasts in England, instead of the customary coffee and rolls, and had paid London prices for beer, which are considerably higher than those prevailing in Potsdam. So the bills were ruthlessly cut, and the next salary day saw many clinched teeth, many a tear, when it developed that the difference between the advance and the reduced bills had been deducted from the wages. It is not quite safe to mention the Jubilee year among the Kaiser's servants.

The continual trips of servants between Potsdam and Berlin are responsible for everlasting quibbles between the



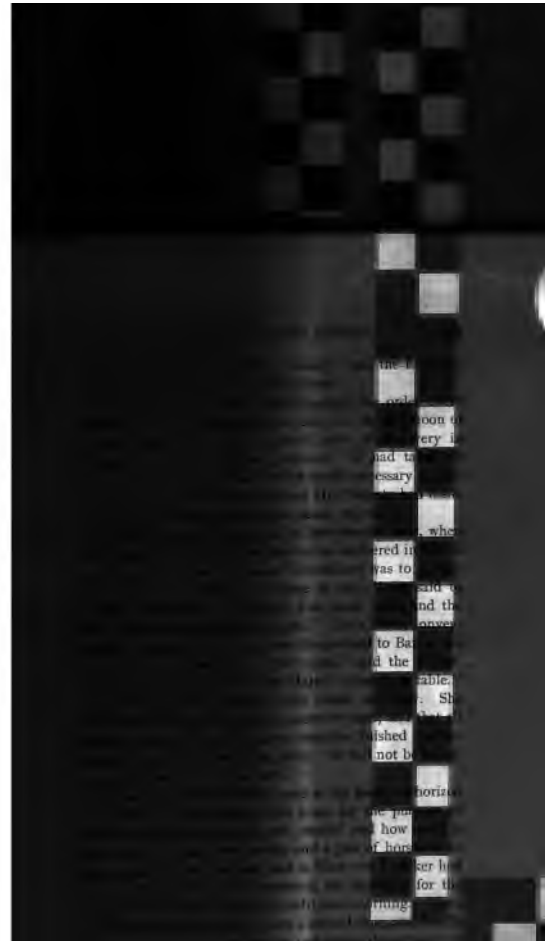


the Court-marshal's office says it is impossible to increase the staff. Besides, we have not the material in stock. When the household linen is given out on Saturdays, the presses are as empty as the proverbial nutshell."

The prevailing penury even reaches to the steps of the throne. Can you imagine an Empress being in need of a couple of toothbrush-holders? Well, Auguste Victoria wanted some for a week and longer, and could not get them. It happened in December, 1894, and I refer to it, not as something extraordinary, but merely to illustrate a point. At the time mentioned Her Majesty had seen some fancy toothbrush-holders in the bedroom of her sister, Louise Sophie, wife of Prince Frederick Leopold. Her Majesty inquired where they had been bought, and, on coming home, ordered me to procure a couple. As Herr Nolte was going to Berlin, I instructed him to bring them along. Next morning, Her Majesty asked why the holders had not been procured. Herr Nolte was called in. "I tried to get an order from Herr Baron von Mirbach," reported the man, "but, there being no funds for such a purpose, he sent me to Count Eulenburg. His Excellency, despite my respectful protest, insisted that the matter must go through the usual routine, and sent me away."

"Routine,—and what may that be?" asked the Empress, impatiently, after Herr Nolte had been dismissed.

"The Court-marshal's office," I made answer, "will forward a letter to the store demanding an estimate of the article wanted. Then the royal porcelain manufactory will be asked whether the price is fair or not, and, that being settled, the various chiefs of departments will be required to furnish the money, each, of course, trying to 'unload' upon the other. In this way from six to ten days will be spent."





the artisan commenced on the screen at about the same time when Her Majesty paid a second visit to the guest chambers in company of Countess Keller and Mademoiselle von Haake, both of whom carried divers tidies and cushions from the Empress's own room with which to complete the decorations.

When Auguste Victoria observed that the screen was still missing, she was furious. The housekeeper, the castellan, and chief *fourrier* were ordered to report at once, and, without giving them a chance to explain, Her Majesty abused these people roundly for neglecting the "all-highest" command. At last, Madame von Larisch succeeded in placing the guilt where it belonged, and as the upholsterer simultaneously sent word that the screen would be ready in an hour's time, Her Majesty calmed down.

Scenes and annoyances like the above, growing out of the chronic want of funds, are, however, not limited to demands for extraordinary expenditure. We go through the same farce every time a piece of china or glass in one of the bedrooms is broken, for the Prussian Court has no duplicates of such necessary articles as wash-pitchers, bowls, pails, soap-dishes, or water-bottles. When one of these things in the Kaiserin's chamber, for instance, is smashed, Frau Schade must carry the pieces to the *Haushofmeister*, who lays them before the House-marshal, who lays them before the Court-marshal, who lays them before the treasurer.

Then the treasurer authorizes the making of an estimate to replace the articles, the two marshals countersign the document, and the *Haushofmeister* sends a wagon into town to fetch it, or orders it sent from Berlin. Of course, all this takes time; often several days are spent in winding and unwinding red tape, and in the interim Her Majesty has to get along as best she can without a glass for her

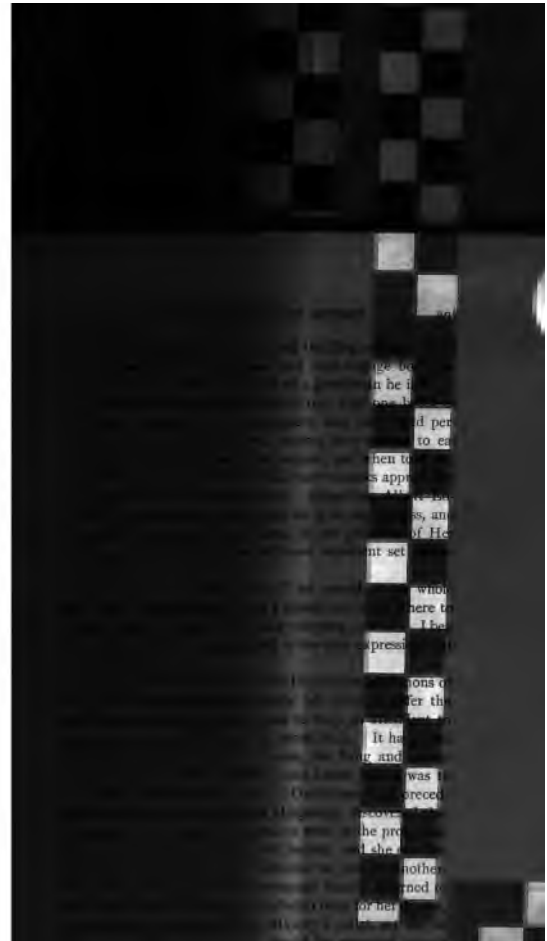




table, never luxurious, is hardly better provided than the average Berlin *table-d'hôte* at three marks at the great *Abfütterungen* (feedings), as the obligatory dinners are called by Count Eulenburg,—visiting army officers, who ought to know, at least say so,—and the arrangements of the *Grand-échanson* and *Grand-écuyer tranchant* at the Court balls are such as to permit only every ninth or tenth of the invited persons to obtain a swallow of third-rate champagne and a sandwich.

The visits of royalty are made occasions of great display, of course; reasonably liberal extra appropriations are made to the chef at such times, and lest the chasseurs make a mistake and pour out inferior vintage for a visiting Excellency or Highness, all courtiers get the best of champagnes, which otherwise are furnished to their Majesties only, but even then the Court-marshal manages to save an honest penny here and there.

Count Herbert Bismarck, returning from a trip to England in 1892, set abroad a story that the Prince of Wales kept away from Berlin because he could not get any of his people to accompany him, which is, of course, nonsense, and was probably never intended to be taken seriously; but it is a fact that during His Royal Highness's last official visit to our Court, in March, 1889, his employees, from valet down to groom, were constantly brawling with Herr von Liebenau on account of what they described as "starvation diet." When the typical German breakfast, consisting of coffee, milk, two rolls, a diminutive pat of butter, and two pieces of sugar, was sent in to the valet, he demanded steak and eggs in addition, and so did the footmen and grooms. These protests were treated with silent contempt by Herr von Liebenau, but when the noon meal called forth similar criticisms, he threatened to inform His Royal Highness of the men's "unruly behavior."





Italian dame, when the footman brought her lentil soup, with fresh pork, a piece of warmed-over pot-roast, six potatoes, and a bottle of beer. Lentils, pork, pot-roast, and beer! And presently she was to dress her Queen, a lady of the finest sensibilities! The *Italienne's* inborn aversion to this essentially Teutonic menu was almost as great as her official horror. She rang for Mademoiselle von Haake. "Please tell your mistress," she said, politely but firmly, "that I cannot, and, moreover, dare not, eat this stuff. I shall have to ride into town to get my dinner, and if no carriage is to be had, I will take the next train to Berlin."

"But what will the Queen say, if you are not here to dress her for the banquet?"

"Her Majesty will be late, of course, but she would rather be late than see me starve. I know you Germans look down upon us poor Italians, but at my mistress's house every visitor is provided with food suitable to her rank."

Fräulein von Haake was thunderstruck. I can see her yet, poor soul! as she slunk into the parlor where we were sitting, and at the door waited for an opportunity to catch Her Majesty's eye. The Kaiserin, thinking something was wrong with her costume, sent me to inquire what was the matter. "Only Her Majesty can prevent a scandal," she whispered: "it concerns our guests." Alarmed by my report, the Empress went over to Haake. A short while later she called out, in sharp, commanding tones: "Count Pückler."

The Court-marshal ran to Her Majesty. "The kitchen is in your charge?" she demanded, brusquely. Every one in the room could hear her words.

"At Your Majesty's commands."

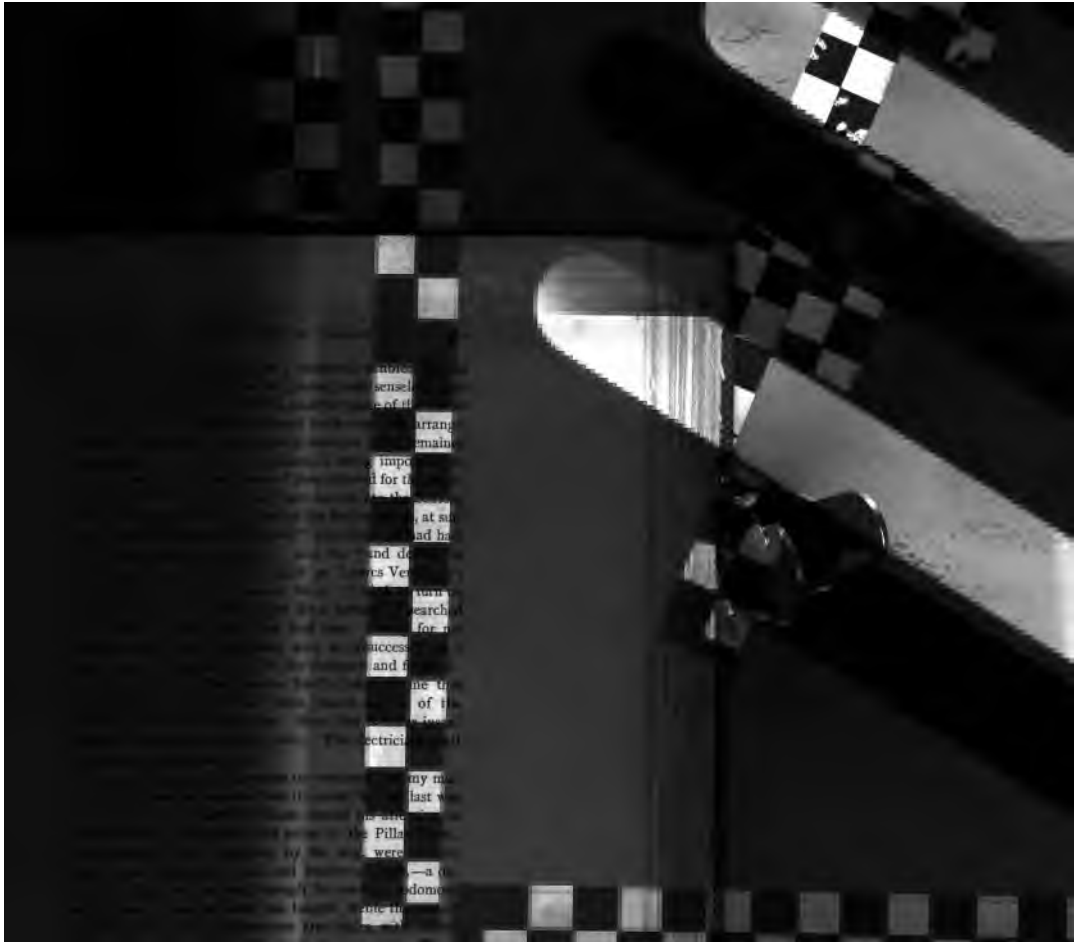
"Then see to it that every one of their Majesties' attendants—*every one*, I say—is provided with food from my own kitchen. Go and carry out my orders, and,"





than to see the 'box' in ruins so that he might utilize the stones and pillars to rear another pile, but I fail to see the humor of it now. Bernhardt and I thought it funny to see a room in the Schloss, just finished with gilded stucco, paintings and wainscotings, in a state of demolition at our next visit, but when we were told that the work of reconstructing the interior arrangements of the palace had cost twice as much as was first estimated, His Majesty's want of sympathy with the ideas of others, the rapidity with which he changes his mind about building schemes that some months or weeks previous found his enthusiastic approval, began to alarm us. Now we see to what it leads."

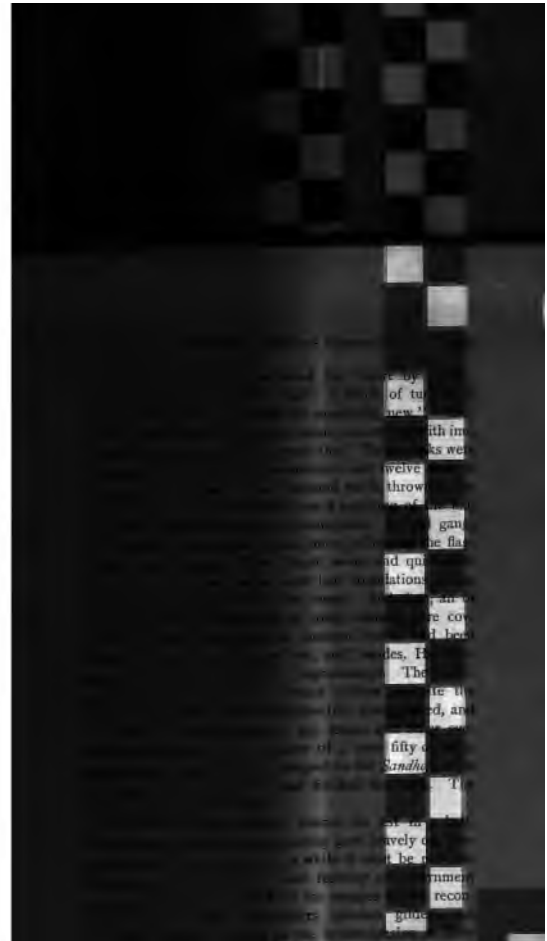
When Princess Charlotte spoke thus to a few intimate friends, she had the best reason in the world for quarrelling with the Emperor, yet her statements were in no wise exaggerated. Hardly had the masons, plasterers, carpenters, painters, decorators, furnishers, and artists left the reconstructed Schloss, after a year's work, than the Kaiser ordered the greater number of rooms torn up again. Here a classic painting set into the ceiling was too dark, there the stucco was not heavy enough; in another hall the old-fashioned and very beautiful fire-places were "spoiling everything," and nothing would do but to have new plans drawn up a twelvemonth after the original ones were audited. The army of artisans was recalled to the castle and chaos was re-established, while the Kaiser went on his visiting tours to the German sovereigns. When, after a month's absence, His Majesty inspected his winter home a second time and saw his own ideas represented, he was happy, and expressed his entire satisfaction before the whole Court, but that did not hinder him from proclaiming "the library a shabby barn, resembling a school-room," the day after. As a matter of fact, the library was then a beautiful apartment, beautiful in a style that harmonized





air of cheapness despite their high price, but the Kaiser improved on his own taste, and so all was well—for a time.

And the White Hall of the castle! William has meddled with it ever since the day he turned his mother out of her apartments in the Neues Palais, and the result is an architectural and decorative nightmare, stilted, forever unfinished, bleak and empty. Alterations to-day decreed and inaugurated with much trumpeting invariably prove disappointments of the morrow, and are forthwith abolished to make room for the realization of some new momentary photographs on the imperial mind. Often we hear, for weeks at a time, nothing but White Hall talk at table and other occasions when the Emperor is present. Now it is to be a Marble Hall, next the "symphonies of silver" are to be revived, which Frederick William created in the shape of balconies, balustrades, tables, pillars, and mighty chandeliers, all of the sterling metal, and which Frederick turned into the melting-pots during the Seven Years' War. "Only white and gold, set off by red velvet, are to be employed in the decorations." "No: yellow silk is the modern imperial color," and so on and so on. After the birth of the Ægir song, the Kaiser had the musicians' gallery reconstructed after his own plans: being a competitor for Wagnerian honors, he thought it incumbent upon him to imitate the maestro, who invented the invisible orchestra, in other respects also; but after ten thousand marks had been wasted in the enterprise, it turned out that the remodelled box was entirely unfit for use. All the royal leaders were successively invited to perform in it and all declined, pleading lack of room and acoustic difficulties. At present the band performs in the *Diplomatenloge*, the Ambassadors have been shifted to the royal box, and royalty is without an up-stairs home in the White Hall.



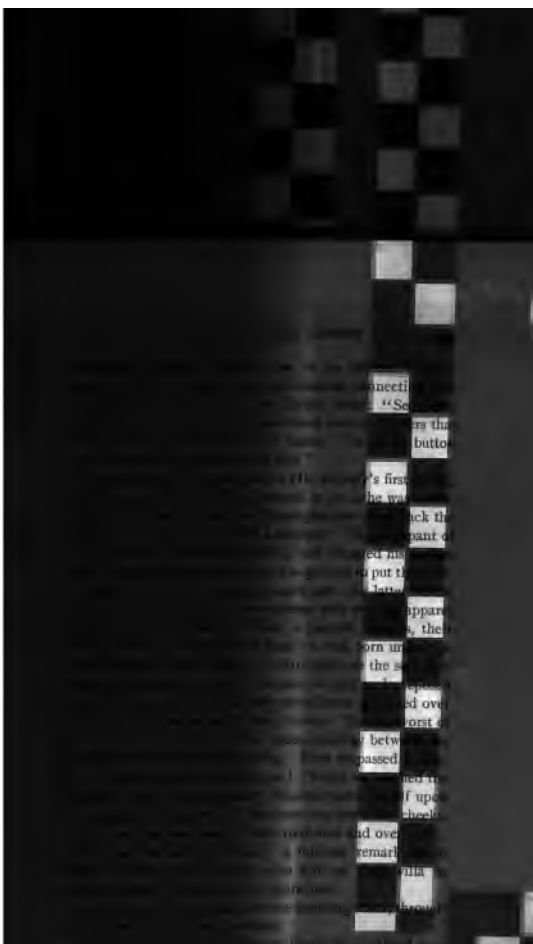


Majesty quickly finds ways and means to bring them back. In the summer of 1897, for instance, he gave permission that the bedrooms and sitting-rooms of the *Hofdamen* in the Berlin Schloss should be redecorated and refurnished, and when all was finished, he telegraphed from Homburg that their *salons* should likewise undergo a thorough overhauling. That order meant nothing short of re-establishing chaos in the rooms just finished, for the ladders and scaffolding had to be carried through them, there being no corridors in connection with the departments.

But despite these enormous building exploits, the palaces are very far from modern, because there is no method in the work. Everything is done piecemeal; innovations of to-day are abandoned upon second thought. The very idea of concentration is wanting.

To show how things are done, I will narrate a rather ludicrous incident, which happened in the winter of 1893, shortly after His Majesty's Turkish smoking-room was finished, an apartment situated in the wing of the Berlin Schloss overlooking the Elector's Bridge. One evening, several guests, among them the Princess Frederick Charles, Prince Fless, Prince and Princess Radziwill, and the Hereditary Prince and Princess of Hohenzollern, were to be introduced, after supper, to the splendors and comforts of the Oriental chamber. That the smoking-room, at the time being, could be reached only by way of the private apartment of one of the adjutants was so small a matter that it had never been given a second thought!

At the conclusion of the repast, we formed the usual stately procession,—at the head the *Haus Hofmeister* and the chamberlain *du jour*, the adjutants coming second, and immediately after them Her Majesty upon the arm of the Prince of Hohenzollern, the Kaiser conducting his great-aunt, and the rest following according to rank and station.

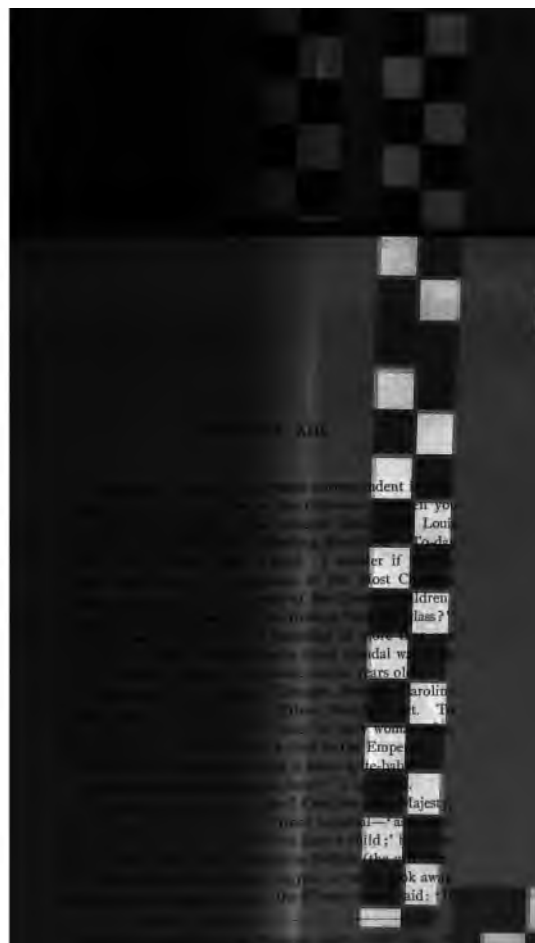




state visits to the foreign courts is, strange to say, not the most excessive item. True, when we went to Rome in the spring of 1893, the King and Queen of Italy said His Majesty's train of eighty people reminded them of the deluge; but our three days' stay at Hannover in the winter of 1891 cost nearly half as much as the tour in the Peninsula, namely, one hundred and twenty thousand marks, one-third of which was expended for carpets and rugs. The royal castles, you must know, are empty barns for the most part, and whenever either of the Majesties visits the residences in Breslau, Königsberg, Cassel, Wiesbaden, Homburg, and Stettin, or when William goes to his various hunting-boxes, whole car-loads of furniture, pictures, decorative material, and all the necessary silver, linen, and kitchen utensils must be sent ahead, together with a full force of servants, horses and carriages, food and forage. Fancy, then, the tumult occasioned by the meeting between the Romanoffs and Hohenzollerns in the capital of Silesia in the summer of 1896, when *two* palaces had to be furnished from top to bottom! The robbing of Peter to pay Paul was almost pitiful to behold: my mistress actually had to give up her favorite damask curtains, which she bought out of her own money for Wilhelmsöhe, to garnish the connubial couch of Nicholas and Alix, while she herself had to sleep in a bed once occupied by the plebeian King Jerome, brought on from Cassel. The *pièces de résistance* in the home improvised for their Russian Majesties in Breslau were taken from the consignment of Empire furniture, which one of the *Kurfürsts* of Hesse bought in Paris some fifty years ago and for which payment was refused. His Royal Highness's Diet had to liquidate the bill in the end, and when the Prussians annexed the country, they promptly seized the furniture as one of the people's assets.







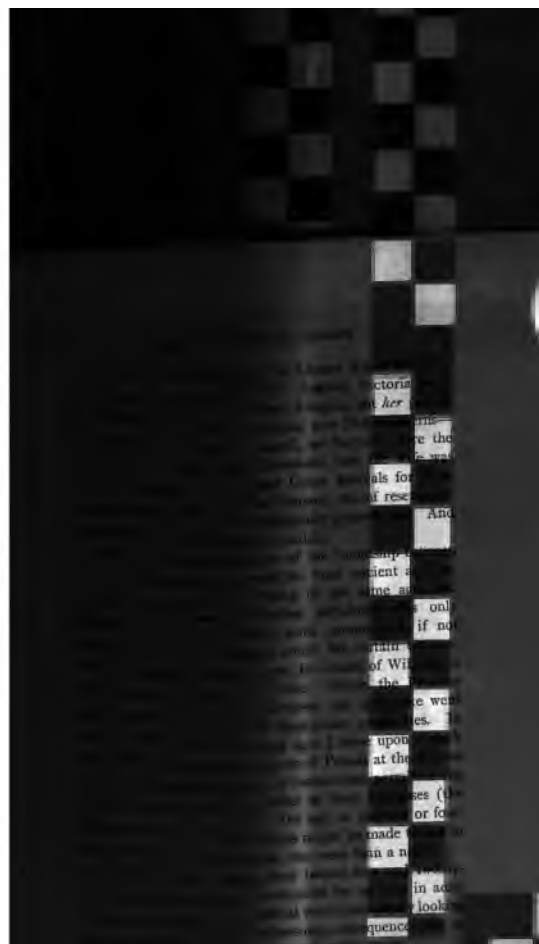


I get only half a chance, I will show them who the idiot is.' In August or September, 1882, her child was born, two or three weeks after Eitel Fritz, the Kaiser's second son, saw the light at the Marble Palace."

I remembered the circumstances perfectly, and my question to Madame von Kotze was merely asked to help clear up, if possible, the authorship of the unsigned communications that had kept their Majesties and the Court in a turmoil for two years. I was one of many in the royal service and society generally who did not believe the Kotzes guilty, and have never had occasion to change this opinion. Jealousy was alleged to be the mainspring of the scandal,—Madame von Kotze's jealousy of Countess Fritz Hohenau's ascendancy over the Kaiser. I put the question to disabuse my mind of any suspicions of that sort.

To return to William's infatuation for Mademoiselle Seiffert. That story was well known to the intimates of the late Crown Prince's circle.¹ "*Unser Fritz*" did not mind it much. Having been kept well in hand by his "Vicky" all through married life, I suspect he even took some mischievous delight in his son's escapade. Poor man! he was fond enough of that sort of thing, as his visit to the Court of the late Alphonse XII, so rich in adventure, proved. But in the Princess Imperial's eyes a *liaison* was little short of a crime. Pictures of the fourth George and Mrs. Fitz-Herbert, she told me once, arose before her mental eyes every time she thought of the matter. At that period, be it remembered, the history of Prince and Princess William's marriage was as fresh in everybody's memory as it is now obscure,—as fresh as were the incidents attending George's courtship with Caroline of Brunswick during the first ten years after Europe's gentleman

¹ Afterward Emperor Frederick.





mood that had led him into the adventure, and his first serious misunderstanding with his sister Charlotte arose on account of a clever bit of poetry cited by Her Royal Highness "in honor of the occasion," as she expressed herself:

*"Vater werden ist nicht schwer,
Aber's sein um desto mehr."¹*

Caroline was not sentimental about the affair. Unlike Marie Vecsra, she had never dreamed of a diadem, or even a coronet, to gloss over her fall from virtue. She proved as selfish as her lover *pro tem.*, or as any other man, for that matter, might have been. Only by a short telegram sought she to reopen communication with the father; her next step was to formulate her demands at the German Embassy in her native city.

There were frantic messages from Prince Reuss, husband of the royal and imperious Marie: "I am neither a Eugène Beauharnais² nor a Talleyrand, who always had his pockets lined with mistresses," he wrote. "What have I to do with this affair?"

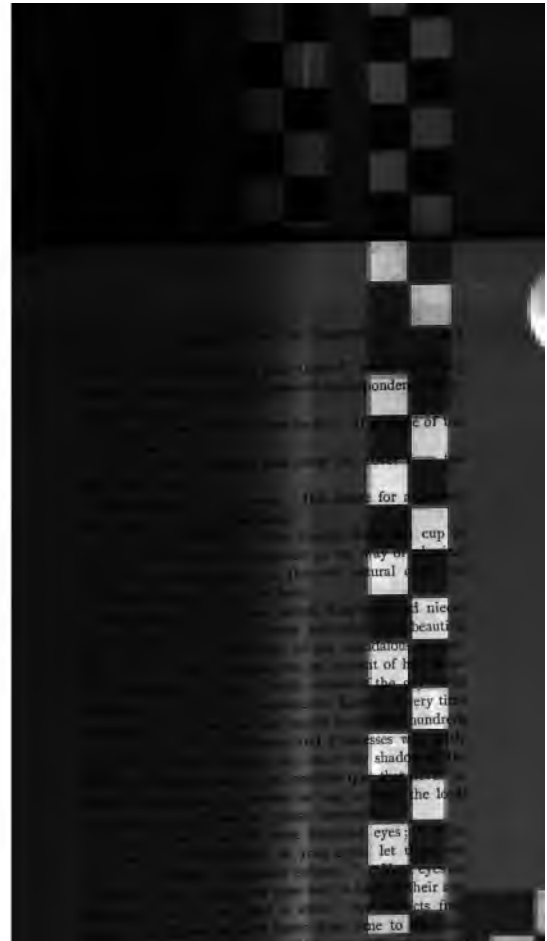
However, Prince Bismarck, who was friendly both to Reuss and William, at last persuaded the Ambassador to look into the case.

"A hundred thousand florins," said Mademoiselle Seifert.

"Nonsense. The Prince owes you no more than hundreds of others. His Royal Highness denounces the baby as a harlequin."

¹ "To become a father is not difficult, but to be one is."

² He referred to the time when Eugène Beauharnais, as Napoleon's aid, was obliged, like others in a similar position, to keep his eyes open for pretty women that might please his General and step-father.





Vienna Uranus brethren, or sisters, as they call themselves, associations of abnormally-inclined individuals who claim to possess a female soul in a man's body, and whose motto reads: "*A bas les femmes.*" These German and Slav colleagues of the French "Knights of the Rosary" (the latter club is headed by the Marquis of Larochevoucaud and Josephine Pelladan, and is highly respectable) claim the Emperor as one of their own, although there is no apparent reason for their surmise, save the fact that Frederick the Great seems to have belonged to this unhappy class of men. Leaving that arrogation in dispute, they appear to base their assumption on a circumstance that should strike any unbiased mind as most creditable,—upon the non-existence of a recognized royal mistress.

These feminine men, infinitely more detestable and withal more debased than the so-called masculine women, who are often merely ridiculous, while at other times they compel one's admiration because of the superior intellects found in their ranks,—the Uranus brethren pursue the Kaiser as often as he visits Vienna, with brazen effrontery, and some of their letters, which have fallen into the hands of my mistress, would afford good grounds for prosecutions for *lèse majesté*,—the majesty of manhood. I remember one particularly outrageous note, which was written on a perfumed letter-head, bearing the inscription: "*Wiener Club der Vernünftigen*" (Vienna Club of the Reasonable). It arrived a few days after the Kaiser's return, and, the envelope proclaiming a private character, was opened by His Majesty in person. "*Mon bon frère,*" commenced the missive in quite royal fashion, "we have searched the records of history in order to further substantiate the belief that, like your great ancestor and his immortal friend, Voltaire, you are one of us. The elective affinity, nay, the consanguinity itself, is not difficult to establish. Your





When through with these negotiations, Baron Richthofen arrived at the conclusion that the saying *en vogue* at the Court of Henry III of France (Henry was one of the most noted "Greco"): "*En España, los caballeros; en Francia et Austria, los grandes; en Alemania, pocos; en Italia, todos*,"¹ holds good to this day.

There is, as I said, not the slightest connecting-link in the make-up of William's character to justify the insolent suggestions of these degenerates. The Kaiser, though he has his peculiar likes, admires woman's beauty as much as any man; and if the Berlin Court of to-day is as notorious for the ugliness of its female members as that of the old Emperor and Empress was for *beautés*, it is not William's fault.

The Empress, my august mistress, is jealousy personified, and not only surrounds herself with a chain of *passé* and sour dames, but treats women of the aristocracy who possess attractions that might possibly captivate the Kaiser, with such exquisite and cunning ill-grace that they are obliged to keep away from Court as often as etiquette permits. With the exception of Countess Bassewitz, who is young and pretty of face, all Her Majesty's ladies belong to the old guard, and if, perchance, a good-looking girl is engaged for the higher duties of the household where the Emperor is liable to meet her, Auguste Victoria soon finds ways and means to rid the palace of that ray of sunshine. Either the young person is driven to hand in her resignation by those arts which jealous women understand so well, or is transferred to some distant residence which the imperial master never visits.

Sinfully fair chambermaids even are subject to that rule, and if I feared not to ruin their chances in life, I could

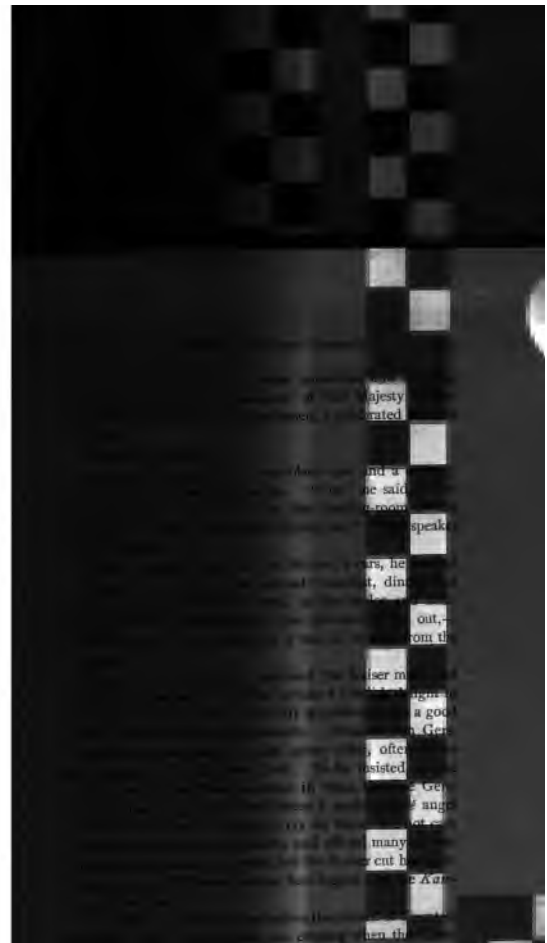
¹ In Spain, the Knights are devoted to this vice; in France and Austria, the aristocrats; in Germany, a few; in Italy, everybody is.





William the First's hospitable board and ball-room were graced by such perfect belles as the Countesses Schimmelmann and Münster, while his sister-in-law, the Princess Charles, successively engaged as maids of honor the fairest of the fair the Fatherland produced, chief among them the late Countess Seydwietz, "Fifi," as she was affectionately called. Her Ladyship was the idol of the great world, and as fond of the King and his fine cavaliers as they were of her. Ah, the sighing and cursing that went on, when at last she married her dashing *chef d'escadron* of the *Garde du Corps*, Count Dönhoff! Beautiful Rose von der Schulenburg, the Countess Bünau, she of the far-famed Titian locks, and Mira, Countess von Schlippenbach, young, lovely, and an adept in every ladies' sport, are not yet forgotten, either. Their successors in official positions—Fräulein von Gersdorff and the Countess Keller, Her Majesty's favorite maids of honor—are notable only for their plainness, and both are several years older than Auguste Victoria. When their younger colleague, Countess von der Schulenburg, resigned some two years ago to marry Count Pückler, the grand-mistress and her venerable adjutants tried their best to give the place to another old maid, or "remote virgin," as the Berliner says; but His Majesty put his foot down, and declared that he had enough "old iron" in the house, and that the new-comer must be young and charming. So Marie Bassewitz was selected for the post. She possesses youth and good looks, as the Kaiser demanded, but the Empress is not jealous of her: Her Ladyship's hands are far from beautiful.

At the time of the Medical Congress in Berlin, in 1891, Her Majesty granted an audience to a number of the visiting *Esculaps*, and a chamberlain of the Empress Frederick, sitting near them at the *table-d'hôte* in the Hotel de Rome the same afternoon, witnessed the following conversation:



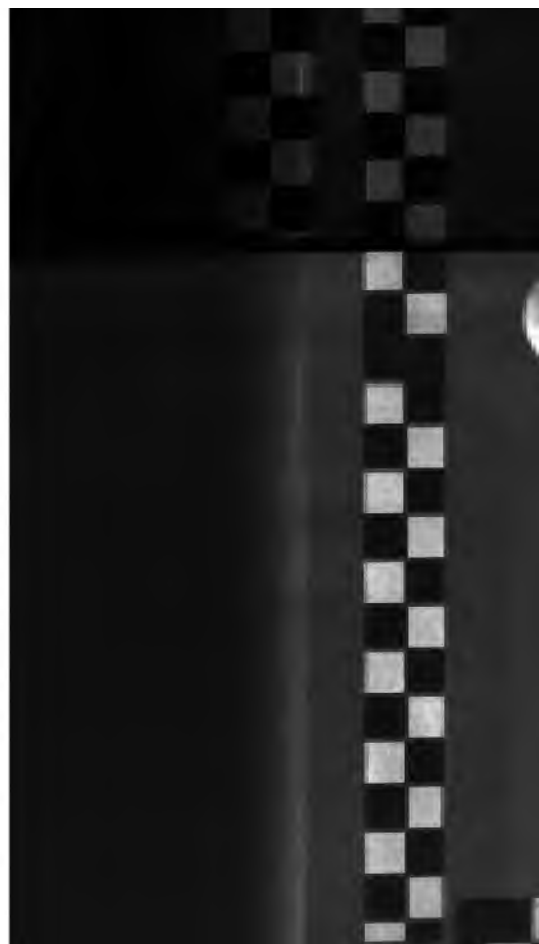


marry. Perhaps they do not go out enough. What do you think, Willie?"

"Pshaw!" answered the Emperor, gruffly, "I think these ladies have all the freedom they want. Why cannot they get husbands? Ask the next best looking-glass."

These pleasantries were offered before the anonymous letter scandal had driven the few handsome or clever women belonging to Court society, though not to the Court, to other cities or to the country; that is, before Countess Hohenau, Madame von Kotze, Madame de Panafiel, and the Baroness von Leipziger had permanently retired. The quartet did not comprise the whole royal set, of course; Countess Marianne Dohna, Madame von Alvensleben, the Countesses Kanitz and Wedell, Baroness von Arnim and the Countess Nemes von Hidvégh, not forgetting a host of princely dames, distant relatives of the Hohenzollerns and Schleswigs, have both youth and beauty; but none of them ever belonged to the inner circle. They call and dance at Court, are dined and banqueted, some of the favored ones, especially the wives and daughters of high army officers, like Madame von Sick, *née* Countess Schlieben, Madame von Plüskow, and Mademoiselle von Albedyll, daughter of His Majesty's adjutant-general, ride to the hounds in the royal preserves occasionally; yet none of these ladies ever enjoyed the Kaiser's favor, none of them ever became William's "*Spezi*,"¹ as the Viennese say. Perhaps that term did not apply to Madame von Leipziger's actual relations to the Kaiser, either; but I know it from his own lips that he admired this charming though plain woman, and would have gladly given her a position at Court if Her Majesty had permitted it. Of the other "*Spezis*," Madame von Kotze was for

¹ This is an abbreviation of special, special friend, chum.





increased her fortune enormously by marriage, madame ranks as one of the smartest dressers, and envy must grant that she has lovely shoulders and a superbly-chiselled bosom. She is a good talker, quick at repartee, and full of Gallic wit.

"Your Royal Highness's *inspecteuse des jambes* reports for duty." With these words, Madame von Kotze greeted Prince William at the beginning of the second carnival ball of 1886, as he stood conversing with some dowagers on the steps of the throne in the White Hall.

I should not believe it possible, had I not heard the words myself; still, I confess the jolly mockery of the woman's voice, the innocent look on her face took away much of the coarseness of the expression.

William had seemingly not been in the happiest of moods until then. At the approach of Madame von Kotze, his face lit up, and, taking the pretty woman's arm, he bowed with a little sneer before the elder ladies as he withdrew with his fair escort.

"*Les jambes ou la main gauche?*"¹ exclaimed one of the grand dames quite audibly as she followed the pair with her eyes. "Calm yourself, madame," I thought; "Prince William has nothing in common with his ancestor² who was forever rolling between the nuptial couch and the alcove, or kept these establishments side by side, snapping his fat fingers at those who talked of bigamy. He loves to

¹ "Legs, or the left hand?" Morganatic marriages are called marriages by the left hand in Germany.

² Frederick William II of Prussia openly married Countess Doenhoff, and, after her, several other women during the life-time of his second queen, Frederika. The children of this marriage, which took place in 1791, were styled Counts and Countesses of Brandenburg. Queen Frederika lived until 1805, and was never divorced. Countess Doenhoff survived her twenty-nine years.





"Stop that!" called Louis XVI, who, as usual, was the most conspicuous wall-flower in the room. "You don't need to take Her Majesty's orders of that sort *verbatim*."

Of course everybody regretted not having been an Englishman a hundred and more years ago,—“an Englishman who dared treat a queen like a ballet-girl.”

“Or a living picture,” cried Duke Günther.

“Pst! not so loud,” said Frau von Kotze, with a side glance to another part of the room, where Baroness von Reischach, *née* Princess Ratibor, was supping with the Countess of Hidvæg, both stars of many *tableaux vivants*.

“But your report, Madame *inspecteuse*,” began the Prince of Ratibor, now dead, the same who turned house-breaker for the love of an Emperor's daughter, “we insist upon a report, and a minute one.”

“Well,” replied Madame von Kotze, with comic *grandesse*, “we were not overpleased with the new fashion, were we, Your Royal Highness?”

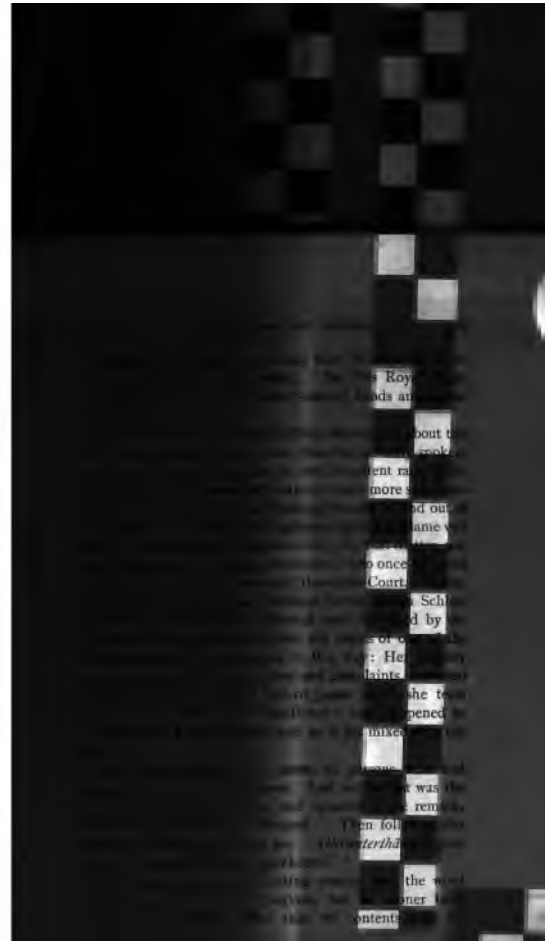
Prince William nodded. “Your Ladyship will proceed,” he said; “do not keep these studious young men waiting.”

“As intimated,” continued the young woman, “we found the present mode of short dresses not very advantageous to our Christian purpose. When a girl dances in a long gown, she must necessarily raise her skirt, and, in doing so, often displays more of her hosiery than intended. This season dancers leave their skirts severely alone, and if a man should take hold of them, as he is obliged to do when long trains are worn, Baron von Richthofen would be called into requisition, I am afraid.”

“Then you have seen nothing?”

“Not much in the line of calves,” said the Prince.

“You talk like a butcher. In England no one looks for calves. A pretty ankle is the thing there.” This from the Duke of Schleswig.





everybody's lips. Most of the courtiers were honest enough to see the point of the attack (for, after all, the mixing up of papers was not wholly accidental); but the Schrader faction, that is, the friends of Master of Ceremony von Schrader, the same who was afterward shot and killed by von Kotze, would not have it so. They insisted that there was some mysterious connection between the refusal of audience and the anonymous letters.





respectable members of Berlin society. The elder, William, a major in the *Garde du Corps*, is now married to a daughter of the Duke d'Ujest, whereby he improved upon his relationship to the Kaiser by becoming cousin-german to Her Majesty too. However, by the grace of his wife's beauty, Fritz is the best known of the brothers, and his fortune, augmented by the von der Decken millions, is the amplest.

The Hohenaus, all of them, men and women, were much befriended by the old Emperor, and Count William came near inveigling Frederick III to revive in his favor the name and title borne by themorganatic wife of Frederick William III, the Countess Harrach. He would be Prince of Liegnitz to-day, had the late Emperor been able to sign the piece of parchment setting forth the creation during the last days of his illness. The present Kaiser never cared much for the "left-handed brood," as he called his cousins, with the pride of the "regularly born," but when he returned in October, 1892, from his hunting-trip to the Principality of Pless, all this was changed.

He had seen his "loveliest and most piquant of *cousines*," and was now convinced that Frederick the Great's *mot* was true, viz.: that a "dash of plebeian blood here and there improves a royal race."

"Of whom are you talking, pray?" asked the Empress, across the table, moving uncomfortably in her seat. "I did not know any of our set were invited."

"I had the pleasure of referring to Fritz Hohenau's wife."

"Oh, *that* woman. She is a gamekeeper's daughter, or something of that sort, is she not?"

The Emperor paid no attention to this sally. "Eulenburg," he addressed the grand-master, "I will go over the list of this season's guests with you presently." And from





were awaiting him in the court-yard, the horses being drawn up in a semicircle. My immediate neighbor, on one side, was the only lady in the company, Countess Fritz. She rode a long-legged hunter of a peculiar red color, straddling the animal *jambe de ça, jambe de là*. Her costume was appropriate to this sensational manoeuvre: short Russian trousers reaching to the knee, a close-fitting cut-away velvet coat over a red vest and shirt, the latter partly hidden by a green tie, a jaunty *Calabreser* hat, and high patent-leather boots reaching a little over the knees in front, but cut out in the back, allowing the upper part of the silk-stockinged calf to be seen.

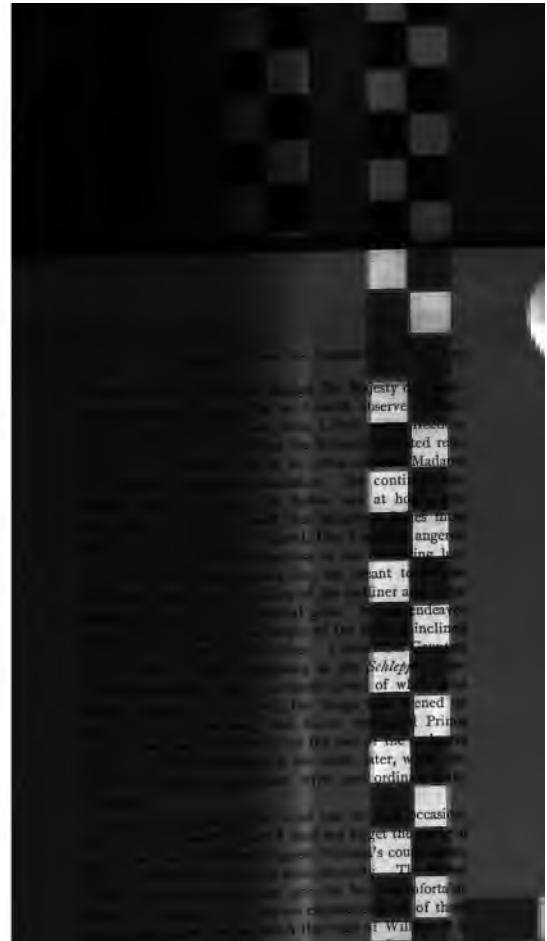
"As the Kaiser appeared in the door and stood still a moment to acknowledge our greetings, his eyes caught the parcel of sensual loveliness at my side. His face reddened with pleasure. Scarcely was he in the saddle when he cried out: 'Cousin Charlotte, a word with you.'

"I will bet my best pointer, Countess Fritz had expected the invitation," continued my informant, "but women *will* be actresses, you know. She played the surprised, the bewildered. Perfect horsewoman that she is, and capable of subduing the most stubborn beast by the pressure of her victorious thighs, the fox-mare got away with her—apparently. She reared, pawed the air, and seemed altogether unmanageable. Never saw anything better done at Renz's.¹

"Suddenly a blow from Madame's gold-headed whip between the horse's ears, and with one leap the amazon was at His Majesty's side. 'Well done, *cousine*,' we heard His Majesty say. They galloped ahead, the rest of us following at a respectful distance, dog-trot pace."

Of course, Madame von Kotze was far from pleased at the advent of this new star. Rivalries were inevitable

¹ Then the foremost circus of Germany.

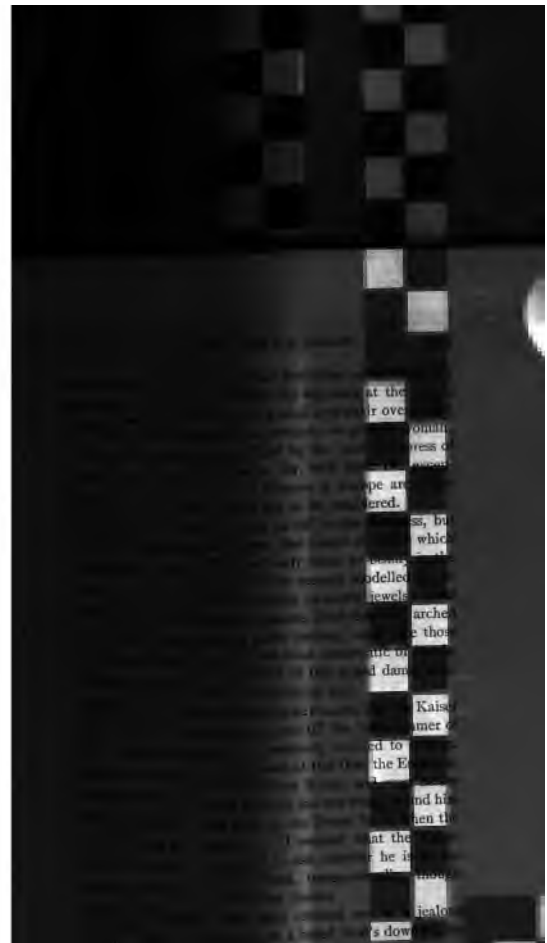




funny "to set the two women by the ears" (the satisfaction with which Her Majesty viewed the spectacle was likewise not to be underestimated); but after Countess Fritz, in a private audience, sought twelve hours later, had unbosomed herself to His Majesty, all this was changed. The master of ceremony was ordered to explain the reason for the unheard-of breach of etiquette; and his excuse, that Her Ladyship had arrived too late to be ranged according to her rank, was assiduously published in the palace, in the *salons* and clubs. Then it was given out that His Majesty himself intended to rehabilitate Countess Fritz, and a banquet was forthwith held where Her Ladyship occupied the seat of honor on the Emperor's right, while Madame von Kotze was placed considerably lower down at the table. This was according to "all-highest orders," but, after all, it is not easy to triumph over a woman of Madame von Kotze's acumen. Her husband showed the roster at home, of course, and Her Ladyship acquiesced in the new order of things quite gracefully, it is said, but insisted upon being given a place where she could watch His Majesty and the Countess, and listen to the general run of their conversation. That this arrangement, which all thought natural enough at the time, was afterward turned into an argument for Herr von Kotze's incrimination, will be narrated in a later chapter.

While these rivals for royal favors were disporting their anger and jealousies under Her Majesty's nose, so to speak, William basked in the smiles of a very elegant lady quite unknown to the Court, which affects to know everything. She was Madame, the Countess de Panafiel, wife of the Portuguese Secretary of Legation in Berlin, who is a grandee in his own country, but did not amount to much in Kaiserin Augusta Strasse.

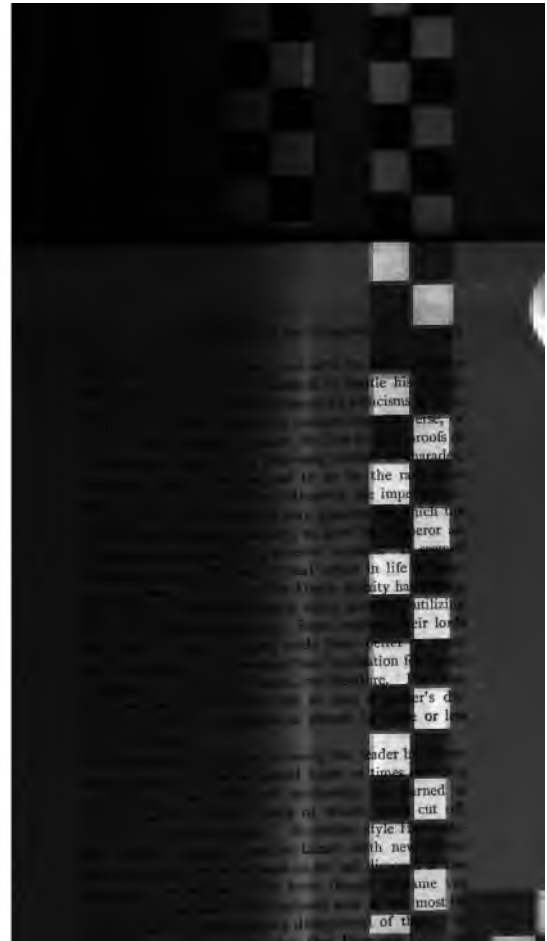
We of the royal service were favored with glimpses of Madame de Panafiel's great beauty only at rare intervals,





recall, the Emperor had hastened to Berlin to inquire into the meaning of the act. The Marquis de Panafiel, Portuguese Ambassador and cousin of the secretary, could give him no satisfaction. Beyond the simple notification by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he had received no information from his capital. However, before nightfall a report that Her Majesty was at the bottom of the affair spread in the palace. Auguste Victoria, it was said, had stated her grievance to the Queen of Italy, and the latter, a truly sympathetic woman, had promised relief; a letter to that effect, from Her Italian Majesty, had been seen by some one in the Kaiserin's confidence. Through King Umberto, the Empress's wish had finally been communicated to Queen Maria Pia, who caused her son to name Count Panafiel's successor.

Madame von Leipziger, the wife of the former Court cotillion leader, retained the royal favor a little longer than the ladies named; but she is homely,—a Madame de Stäel, on a small, a very tiny scale, rather than a Ninon de l'Enclos. Short, with irregular features and a bad complexion, this woman gained her ascendancy over William by means similar to those employed by Talleyrand to secure a reputation as a wit and inventor of *bonmots*. As the ex-bishop of Autun was never long without his "breviary," the "*Improvisateur français*," a many-volumed collection of anecdotes and smart sayings, so was Madame von Leipziger, while at Court, forever brooding over old and new volumes of magazines, devoted to charades, puzzles, and riddles. She made His Majesty's acquaintance at an early age, when he was a student at Bonn, her birthplace, and knew and appreciated his passion for those mental gymnastics that are liable to give conversation a sheen of *esprit*. The Kaiser, you know, wants to do uncommon things all the time, and where his lion's skin fails to





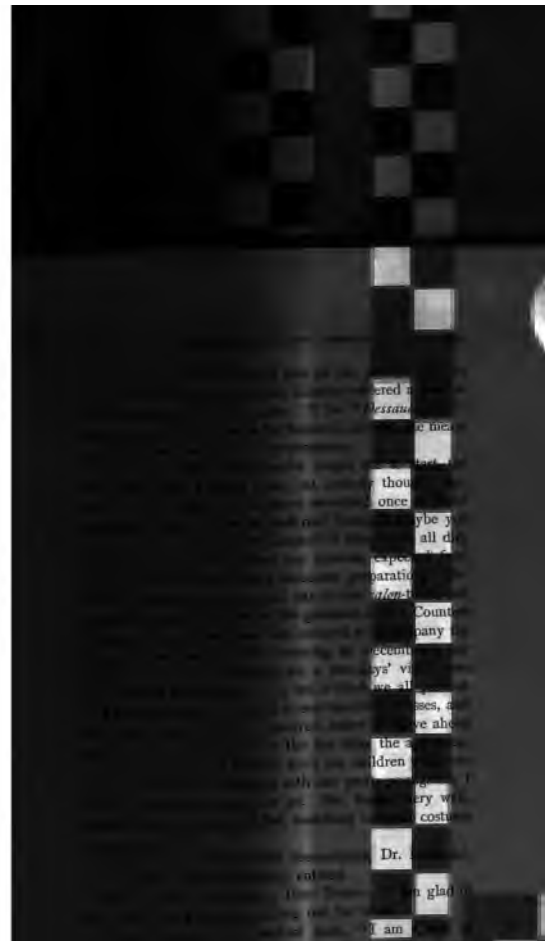
she said: "My sister-in-law would not have any woman under *fifty* amuse the Kaiser."

Thereafter the charade-fiend went to live in the country, and we have never been able to discover whether the Emperor's assertion that Madame von Leipziger is "one of the most intellectual women of the time" is true or not, for the Court knew her only in her detestable specialty.

This happened, as intimated, in the late summer of 1894, when Her Majesty's girdle was already hung with many scalps of *beautés*. The times change, and man changes with the times. The Kaiser, who once freely resorted to married men's tricks to keep his wife from interfering with his private plans, now abandoned, one after another, the women whose company he had so richly enjoyed.

"Off with her head,—so much for Hohenau," "for Kotze," "for Panafel," "for Leipziger," and—"William is to die a good old man." It was certainly a most inspiring spectacle to see this husband and father return to the homely fold where petulance waits upon dreary languor. "But will it last?" everybody kept asking of everybody else. And everybody answered: "It seems impossible that it should." And those of the household who remembered the circumstances of the royal visit to Dessau, in December, 1889, can scarcely be blamed for being suspicious.

Dessau has but a tiny Court, consisting of a few "grand charges" and two or three dames, but the women there rejoice in a well-earned reputation for looseness, with which a corresponding amount of beauty goes hand in hand. Now, as soon as my mistress learned of the Kaiser's projected visit to that *duodex* Sodom, she set to work to procure an invitation for herself. This was easily arranged through the Princess Frederick Charles, sister of the Duke, but for quite a while His Majesty remained deaf to his wife's hints and even to direct requests to take her along. Finally,





tongue. I will also have to examine your jugular glands once more."

"Nonsense," said the Empress, but at the same time she raised her veil and stuck out her tongue, at which the children laughed heartily. After a momentary examination, the physician pulled a long face. "Thank God," he said, "it is not yet too late."

"No, but it will be, if you do not hurry," interrupted the Crown Prince. "Papa will be here presently."

Dr. Leuthold took no notice of the child's joke. "I perceive indications of an inflamed throat that may bring on most serious complications," he resumed, gravely. "Your Majesty must go to bed at once, and must not leave the house for three days. In this way the worst may be forestalled."

"Then I am not going to Dessau?" gasped Auguste Victoria.

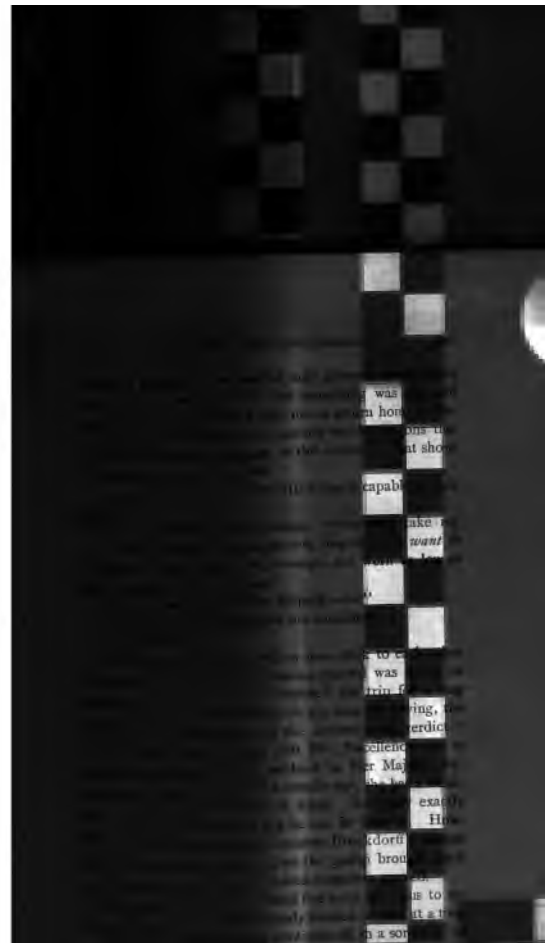
"I cannot permit it," answered Leuthold.

The Empress dropped into an arm-chair and began to cry.

"Is my wife ready?" It was the Emperor's voice outside. I advanced toward him. "Has Leuthold given an adverse decision?" he asked, before I had time to explain anything. His *Kammerdiener*, in black travelling livery, entered simultaneously to announce that the carriage was waiting.

"I am sorry," said the Emperor, stepping up to the Kaiserin and kissing her hand, "but you know one cannot be too careful of one's throat." Then he bade her and the children good-bye, and, turning once more at the door, cried: "I will send back your Brockdorff. She shall keep you company."

"It was all a deep-laid plot, a conspiracy," said Her Excellency afterward. "When I arrived at the train, His



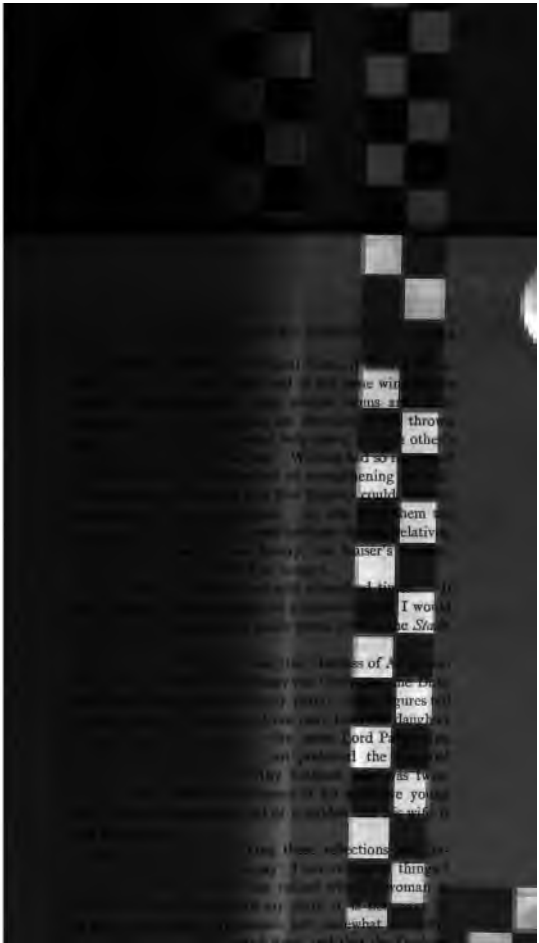


and we ladies had to be prepared to spend our nights on the cars, or in the half-finished chambers of the Schloss, wet with paint and smelling of work-people.

When the Empress said: "I will give audiences in Berlin to-morrow," it probably meant that she had learned of His Majesty's resolve to leave her bed and board for a while and enjoy himself after his own fashion. But the reception accorded to our mistress, after we had caught up with the imperial runaway, was often far from pleasant. When surprised in Berlin, the Emperor sometimes bolted the conjugal couch as early as four or five o'clock in the morning to go on some impromptu hunting expedition, hasty preparations for which had been made overnight.

Auguste Victoria would then receive a few notables at ten in the forenoon, returning to the Neues Palais for lunch, and, perhaps, take another train for Berlin in the evening. Once the Kaiser vamoosed from Hubertusstock, whither we had followed him unbidden. Going out hunting with his gentlemen at early morn, he sent, at supper-time, when Her Majesty was expecting him, a despatch saying that business of state had called him to the capital. All this plotting and counterplotting, the outcome of jealousy on general principles, as a clever woman once said, was ridiculous, wearisome, exhausting,—but tame. More interesting became the matter when a real woman, instead of an imaginary one, happened to be in the race, and such a reality was and is Letizia Bonaparte, Dowager Duchess of Aosta, the daughter of the late Plon-Plon, and her father's true child.

Poor Auguste Victoria! if she could have anticipated the sorry consequences of her good-natured decision to lodge the ex-King of Spain and his blooming young niece-wife in the *Fürsten Wohnung* when they came to Berlin, in November, 1889!





(Amadeo died in the following January) never obtained another invitation to our Court.

True, she again visited Berlin in the beginning of April, 1893, but then the White Lady had no occasion to sweep the *Fürstentreppe* (royal staircase) which connects the living and bed rooms of their Majesties' suite and the *Fürsten Wohnung*.¹ Her Imperial Highness travelled *incognito*, which was the best thing she could do, considering that Auguste Victoria had refused to receive her. Besides, she came as a petitioner. The Kaiser was to intervene on her behalf with King Umberto, who had cut off her allowance and had refused to invite her to his silver wedding because of her alleged *liaisons* with half a dozen officers of the Turin garrison.

Letitia and William met. "Madonna, your every wish is a command," and forthwith a cipher despatch to the King of Italy, couched in the most amiable terms, issued from the German foreign office. It is further claimed that the lovers promised themselves no end of a good time two weeks hence, in Rome; but the same day the Empress got wind of the arrangement by one of those infernal anonymous communications. And in this case the strictly moral Piedmontese, who afterward obliged her again in suppressing Countess Panafiel, was really delighted to do Her Majesty's bidding, as he told her in person during her stay at the Quirinal. To William he telegraphed that he was not at liberty to serve him, the Aosta business being a family affair in which Her Imperial Highness's mother, Princess Clotilde, had the initiative. At the same hour, His Majesty

¹ According to the Margravine of Baireuth, this historic spectre served to frighten away people from a certain corridor, which a General had to pass when he desired to pay his nocturnal respects to a certain maid of honor.





the mistress of the household to take no others. That Letitia's effigy is never taken along on these trips hardly needs special mention, and that its absence from the imperial *secrétaire* is a source of grim satisfaction to Her Majesty is quite self-evident, but woe to the poor house-keeper when the Emperor observes the omission.

As the visit of the King of Roumania was expected on October 25, 1891, the *Hof* went to the Schloss a few days before. Now it happened that Madame von Larisch, after repeatedly suffering the Emperor's displeasure on account of the absence of certain photographs, had decorated the master's Berlin writing-table exactly as it was in Potsdam: with pictures of royal women and girls in all sorts of dress and courtly undress, chief among them a very life-like portrait of the Aosta which, indeed, assisted imagination to an almost flagitious extent. To see this sinful pasteboard and confiscate it was a matter of impulse with the Empress when she inspected the room; but as, at the same moment, Court-marshal von Liebenau was announced to make his report, what was Her Majesty to do? The portrait was too big to slip within the folds of her dress, and to hold it in her hand during the inevitable half-hour's lecture would have been awkward. So she had to put the picture back in its place with the galling knowledge that Liebenau, as well as her own *Kammerdiener*, had observed her jealous action.

The Kaiserin had a similar mortifying experience in April, 1893, when the Duchess of Aosta was in Berlin. On a certain morning, the Kaiser having suddenly left to drive into the city,—“probably to a rendezvous with *that woman*,”—Her Majesty went to look for possible incriminating letters on William's desk, and as she was bending over a pile of correspondence, the Master of the Wardrobe, Herr Fellbach, entered to remove the Kaiser's





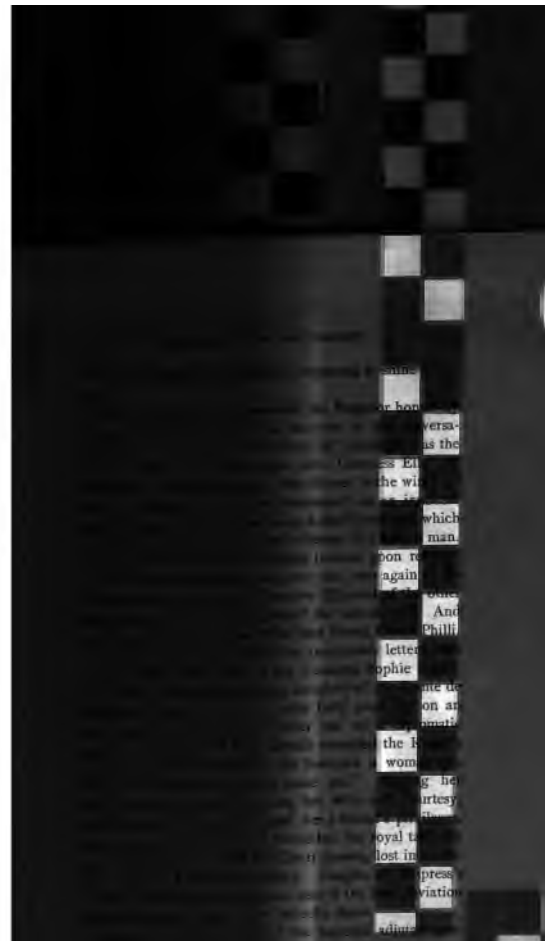
Damrémont), but William II is hardly ever more liberal than the Man of Destiny was on ordinary occasions. Those stories of a king's ransom that "he ties in diamonds 'round his mistress's white neck" are inventions, and not particularly original ones, either. Though indulging in the greatest extravagances where his own pleasure is concerned, the sentiment of self that rules his every act probably persuades him that *ces dames* ought to consider the honor of having been intimate with an Imperial Majesty of his calibre as an offset against disappointments of a financial nature. Speaking of diamonds, the Duke of Schleswig showed me a specimen bracelet of the sort the Emperor uses for an *ouistiti* when he turns off a mistress. A pretty Potsdam girl had lent it to him in a burst of confidence. It was a gold snake bracelet, elaborately chased, with eyes of sapphires, and six or seven circles.

"Not worth much, but of good workmanship," said the Prince; "see, it can be drawn out and spread from wrist to elbow, or over the upper part of the arm."

"I should not think that would look particularly beautiful."

"Perhaps not. It is not intended for beauty, either." The Duke laughed. I did not understand him then. To-day the reason of His Majesty's predilections for snake bracelets is no longer a secret.

That the Kaiser's disposition, or his manners, have improved under the influence of the new order of things cannot, in truth, be said. His humor vacillates between sullenness and indifference when he is at home, and though his nights belong to Her Majesty, his behavior very frequently belies his assertion that he regards Auguste Victoria as *sa femme et sa maitresse* at the same time. And how could it be otherwise? If a man spends his time almost entirely in the society of male friends, soldiers,



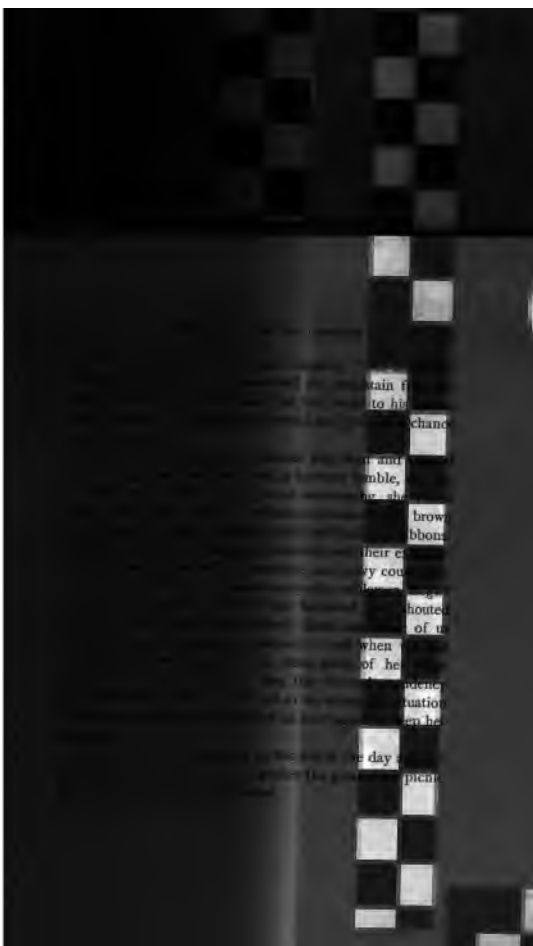


small of stature, fat, and over forty. Instead of wearying her friends with riddles, this amiable woman amuses the Kaiser and the rest of us by her exquisite *drôlerie* and a rare good will to please,—talents that go far toward shortening our long hours of dilatory existence.

Born in Southern Germany, Madame *la Générale* is not hampered by that punctiliousness and the conventional scruples which make the Prussian lady of quality so detestable; though often doing things calculated to drive these staid personages to desperation, scandalmongery itself finds in her conduct small cause for criticism. For the most scandalous thing she ever did was stamped with the all-highest approval, and as she promised the Empress never to do it again, what harm can there be in this most innocent of royal favorites?

The scene of Madame von Scholl's assault upon the proprieties was a lonely natural elevation in the neighborhood of the Havel lakes, whither we had gone, one July day in 1894, on the royal yacht *Alexandra* to spend the afternoon,—their Majesties, the ladies and gentlemen of the service, and a number of guests. It was broiling hot, with a heat that induces sleepiness and ill-temper rather than hilarity. As we crept along toward the near-by forest, only an occasional word was spoken. The Kaiser looked as if he wished himself a hundred miles away, and the Empress was unhappy because her lord seemed displeased. Suddenly there arose the cry: "Where is Madame von Scholl? Did we leave her on the steamer?"—No. Some one had seen her at the landing-place.

While these questions went the rounds, we heard sharp whistling somewhere from above, and there, on the top of the sand-hill, stood madame, swinging her parasol, and turning as swiftly on one brown-stockinged foot as her ponderous weight permitted.





CHAPTER 2. 2.1.

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"I ordered my coachman to keep behind Her Ladyship's carriage, and, though she drove furiously, the command was strictly followed. I saw the Countess's phaeton turn into the court-yard of her villa, and up to eight o'clock to-night she did not leave the house. I have a man there now on watch, according to Your Majesty's orders."

My mistress had grown very red in the face.

"I see your zeal has led you too far," she said, coldly; "but as your friend, Madame von N——, lives near the Hohenaus, drive to her on some pretext and call off your *mouchard*."

Writhing under this undeserved rebuke,—the gratitude of kings,—I was about to say a word that would have tumbled to the ground the cardhouse of self-satisfied assurance, but conquered my passion. Such is life at Court! One has to do things one's womanhood condemns, and is insulted for carrying out the all-highest commands. I had told the truth about Countess Hohenau, but did not tell *all* I observed. If pique had got the better of me, if I had added to my description of the incidents a hint about the graceful courtesy with which Countess Fritz accepted, at the end of the chase, the customary green twig from His Majesty's hand, raised it to her lips, and buried it in her bosom, the whole complexion of social life in the capital for the next two or three years might have been changed, for that knowledge would have wrought the Empress up to such a pitch of passion that, by some decisive step, she would have made it impossible for William to continue in his intrigue. But the courtly usages in which I was brought up compelled me to resist the impulse of anger as well as that of outraged propriety. My mistress never learned the complete, unvarnished story of the Hubertus hunt. "Thou shalt not breathe anything disagreeable," reads the law governing a courtier's life,—"thou shalt not,

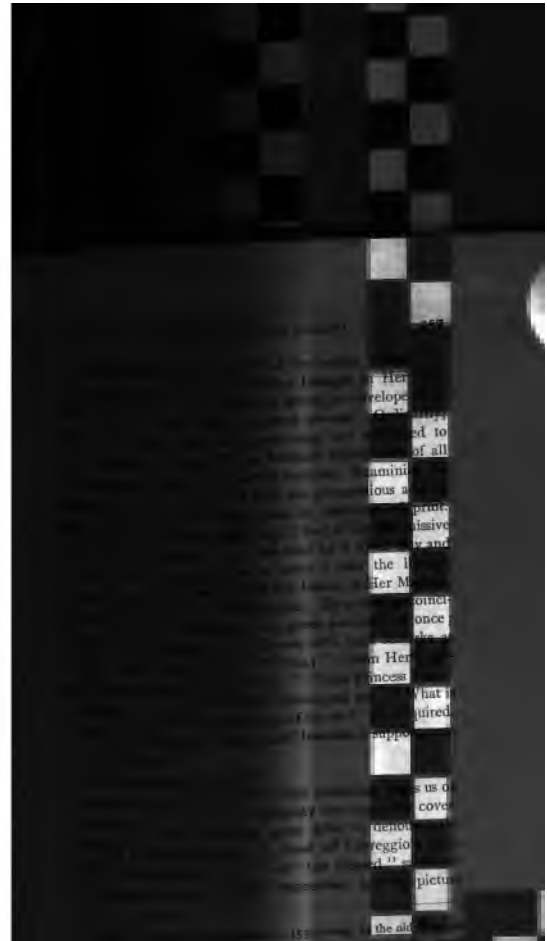




to be immured on a staircase leading from her husband's room in the first story to the cellar. The cruel deed is said to have occurred about 1545, and the walled-up entrance to the staircase can still be seen. There are even many who think they can hear the poor, starved wench moaning in her centuries' old burial-place. To investigate this latter report, Kotze proposed that we adjourn to the Joachim wing. We did so with many affectations of chicken-heartedness, and when we returned and counted noses, as Günther suggested, there were two missing. His Majesty, you must know, had a sleigh ready all evening, the horses being changed hourly, and as soon as the company left the parlors, the Kaiser and Countess Fritz jumped into this vehicle, and, outriders with torches having been sent ahead, drove on toward Potsdam, Charlotte handling the ribbons. Grand-master Eulenburg was, of course, supposed to know nothing of this, but, being responsible for the Kaiser's person, he had arranged for a second sleigh, with the fastest team from the imperial stables, to follow the other at a moment's notice. Its occupants, an expert driver and a valet, were to keep behind the Kaiser without making their presence known.

"When we learned of these precautionary measures, a load came off our minds," concluded my friend, "and particularly the news that Her Ladyship was driving gave us relief, for everybody remembered the many narrow escapes His Majesty has had when acting as his own coachman."

It is further reported that toward five o'clock in the morning the driver and *Kammerdiener* returned, announcing that "His Majesty was safe." That was all the information given out on the subject. Many tried to learn more of the affair, but as the two men were promoted and removed to other parts of the country shortly afterward, the task proved hopeless.





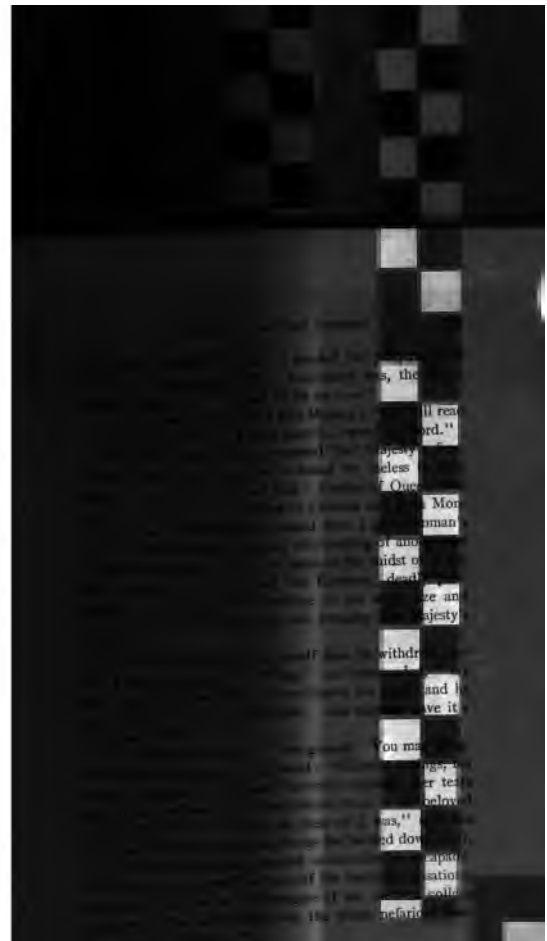
that fell from the envelope was so grossly indecent that I hesitate to even hint at the subject. It represented a scene in the St. Petersburg's ice palace of the eighteenth century, where the great Catherine compelled one of her discarded lovers to spend a night with his mistress. There were two figures, scantily draped in fur robes,—that of a female, bearing on her shoulders the photographed head of Countess Hohenau, and that of a man, exhibiting the Emperor's features.

Her Majesty scanned the abominable caricature with a horrified expression; then, bewildered, disgusted, helpless, she stared at me. I tried to take the picture and letter away from her. "Let me throw these things into the fire," I pleaded, glancing at the door through which the children, with their nurse, might enter at any moment. Instead of answering, Her Majesty got up and went into the anteroom. "*Herr Lüch*," she said, in measured tones to the *Kammerdiener* on duty, "send for Countess Brockdorff. I must see Her Excellency at once. I am at home to no one else. The Princes must not come in until after their drive."

Returning, Auguste Victoria drew me down upon the sofa next to her. "Read me that letter," she said, "my eyes hurt." The poor lady was crying.

"*Loloki*¹ and Lotka on a moonlight night," began the epistle, which purported to tell the incidents of the night at Castle Grunewald, of William's (*Loloki*'s) sleigh-ride with Charlotte (*Lotka*), Countess Hohenau, and of indescribable orgies in which the pair is supposed to have indulged afterward, in such utterly shameless and revolting language that, after reading aloud the first two lines, I refused to proceed. As, to my great relief, Countess

¹"*Loloki*" is the name of a god of Northern mythology.





his other favorites continued undisturbed for the next two years.

During the time from November, 1892, until the summer of 1894, a thousand and more letters of the character described were delivered at the homes of Berlin and Potsdam uppertendom; from Kaiser to clubman, from the first lady in the land to the last of Court society women, nobody, who was anybody, was spared.

The letters came through the ordinary mail, at all hours of the day and evening, postmarked now from this, now from that quarter of the capital or town, and always announcing their damnable character by the letter style adopted. The carrier that brought them, the lackey or maid receiving them from his hands, recognized the Cain's brand as readily as the quick-witted soubrette taking the note to her trembling mistress, or the Major-domo, the *Kammerherr*, or lady-in-waiting performing that disagreeable duty. As the sodden harlots of Whitechapel were at one time hunted by the merciless Jack and his jack-knife, so were the "noblest of the nation," her head and mistress, at the mercy of a nameless defamer, whose pestiferous arrows spared not the child in his mother's womb, and tore the mask of respectability from the face of graybeards whose youthful indiscretions belonged to the period of the fourth Frederick William.

One fine morning Fräulein von L—— was informed that her fiancée was a Lavallière, but not a liar, "and if you do not understand the phrase, look up its meaning in '*Les Contes Drolatiques*.'" Some racy adventures of the Dowager Princess von S——, that happened before I was born, were detailed in revolting terms to an innocent lad, her Grace's grandson, in his mail delivered at the War Academy, and on the eve of her confirmation, proofs were offered to the daughter of one of the highest functionaries in His

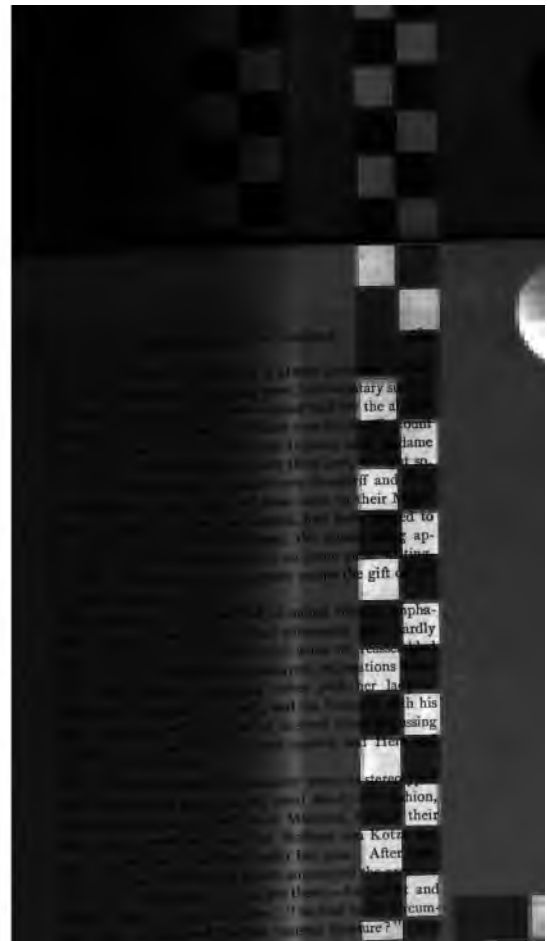




dared dispute it. As Her Majesty said, the slanderer was "one of the official family, or, God save us! Beelzebub himself." Auguste Victoria is very religious, and, like Louis XI, inclines to blame His Satanic Majesty for a good many things.

On the morning of November 17, our little council of war—their Majesties, Countess Brockdorff, and myself—had decided to treat the affair with the most absolute secrecy, and had even formed a sort of quadruple alliance to hunt down the guilty wretch, the Emperor promising to make an example of him or her for all time. But no sooner had the latest *Vehme* dissolved, when its members were informed on all sides that the proposed star-chamber practices would be more than useless. It is easy enough to hide a genealogical tree which in summer affords no shade and in winter no opportunity for hanging one's self; but with a real one, possessing these qualifications to the highest degree, it is quite another matter. To drop metaphor, we learned at luncheon that the affair of the anonymous letters was all over the palace, half a dozen more of the kind received by William and Auguste Victoria having been delivered to members of the household in the course of the morning. At that time the mail-carrier was permitted to leave at the doors of each apartment in the palace the mail addressed to its occupants, so that no one knew what his neighbor got. Nowadays the chief porter intercepts the postman's budget in order to lay the material before His Majesty, if required. Tyrants have ever been opposed to privacy.

That this Russian style of treating privileged communications was introduced at our Court *after* Christmas, 1892, is worthy of consideration. If it had been *en vogue* on the day succeeding the Grunewald revel, the hue and cry raised by the recipients of the anonymous missives would have





Seeing the Kaiser's eyes fixed upon him, Eulenburg handed the pasteboard to His Majesty before he even looked at it himself. William jumped to his feet.

"You must see him at once," he exclaimed; "hear what he has to say, and then report to me!" And as the grand-master went out the Kaiser addressed Herr von Kotze and his adjutants: "Follow me to my study." Then he abruptly left the room.

The *carte de visite* which brought about this unceremonious withdrawal was Fritz Hohenau's, who had come to lay his anonymous letter before Count Eulenburg and thereby indirectly before His Majesty. When the little party arrived in the imperial writing-room, Herr von Kotze, innocent of what was going on, prepared to astonish everybody by a set speech, which he had memorized from his wife's notes on the way to Wildpark station. "May it please Your Majesty to permit —," he began, glancing uneasily at the *entourage*.

"If you are also a victim, out with it, quick!" demanded the Kaiser.

"Poor Leberecht," said General von Scholl, in the evening, "was a picture to behold. At that moment his thoughts probably travelled thrice as fast as they had ever done before. With eyes bulging from his head, he stammered: 'I a victim? A v-i-c-t-i-m?'"

"*Her damit!*"¹ The Kaiser held out his hand with an imperious gesture.

Kotze fumbled nervously in his pocket. "I tremble to show the indecent rag;" "it's entirely unsuitable for Your Majesty's eyes;" "upon my honor, it's too rotten," he kept repeating in a half-remonstrating manner.

"*Her damit, I command you.*" The Kaiser was now fairly beside himself with impatience.

¹ "Give it to me."





like products of a female mind consumed by jealousy and steeped in moral disease.

Like the unspeakable missives of the Vienna, Rome, and Brussels homo-sexual clubs, the letters breathed unrestrained desire for William's person, coupled with fiery hatred for any and every woman crossing his path. That of November 18 tore into shreds the wifely honor of Countess Hohenau; the succeeding one blamed Auguste Victoria for "conspiring to monopolize her husband."

"Do not flatter yourself that the wiles you employ to be forever youthful in the boudoir are your secret alone, imperial Messalina," began this precious document. "Your baths and massages, your tinctures and perfumes,—the meanest scullion in your palace knows their purpose: The Kaiser likes his Venus as she steps from the salubrious deep. But your servants also suspect that this is not the only requirement he imposes upon his charmer. That you hold him so well in hand as you do, and enchain him upon your couch one night out of six all the year round, proves your capability for adaptation," etc.

The above is but a mild and prudish excerpt from the many-paged hailstorm of invectives, and I cannot even suggest the significance of the concluding phrase, which, though in keeping with the whole character of the epistle, is too vile to print, teeming as it does with the sensuality of the brothel and showing in every line the writer's predilection for calling revolting things by the most nauseating terms.

"That's the cloven hoof of the succubus," said the Kaiser, after a consultation with Baron Richthofen; "the female devil always betrays her sex by astonishing profligacy, by an amount of obscenity that is simply beyond man's imagination. Criminal history proves that conclusively."





discussion of the very facts which I was to communicate. As it turned out, the Empress's letter was merely a copy of Bernhardt's.

"Help me to persuade my wife that a divorce would be the best way to put a stop to these ever-repeated scandals," said the future Duke. "We can base it on dynastic considerations, you know, and I will promise my people that they shall never live under a Biesterfeld¹ if I get another chance."

"You *promise*," scoffed Her Royal Highness,—"*you promise*, and forget that our only daughter was born in 1879! Are you not afraid that *your* people may want to know what *you* have been doing these fourteen years?" With this, "Lottchen" threw herself into a corner of a sofa and indulged in wild laughter. Between the storming Prince and his boisterous wife I had difficulty in maintaining my composure and a show of the respect due them. At last Her Royal Highness sprang to her feet again. Her eyes were aflame and her lips trembled with scorn. "I know what you are reckoning on," she resumed, brushing away a pet dog; "you want to get a Holstein *à la* Auguste, and incidentally trust to the maxim of Louis XV: 'that a smart Princess never runs short of sons.' Very well, Bernhardt the Ruffian, I defy you to imitate Milan the Fat, and I will be a second Nathalie, take my word for it! In conclusion, let me remark that we Hohenzollern women have never been accused of barrenness." Saying this, the Emperor's sister bounced out of the *salon*, and I heard her tell the *Kammerdiener* on duty in the antechamber to order her "horse, her ladies, and her gentlemen."

¹ The Hereditary Prince having no male heir, the Duchy will fall, after Bernhardt's death, to the sons of his brother Frederick, husband of Adelheid, *Gräfin* von Lippe-Biesterfeld.





one of his officers, the writer was evidently eager to injure Countess Fritz in His Majesty's eyes. How he must hate that beautiful and vivacious little woman! If she were a Lucretia in licentiousness, or a *Gräfin* Cosel in the matter of spending the country's wealth,¹ she could not have evoked more virulent obloquy. After pillorying her as a common adulteress, the merciless traducer scourged her by accusations "in the face of which even innocence might lose courage." This is an extract from a note the Kaiser received in the first week of April, 1894, while staying at Abbazia:

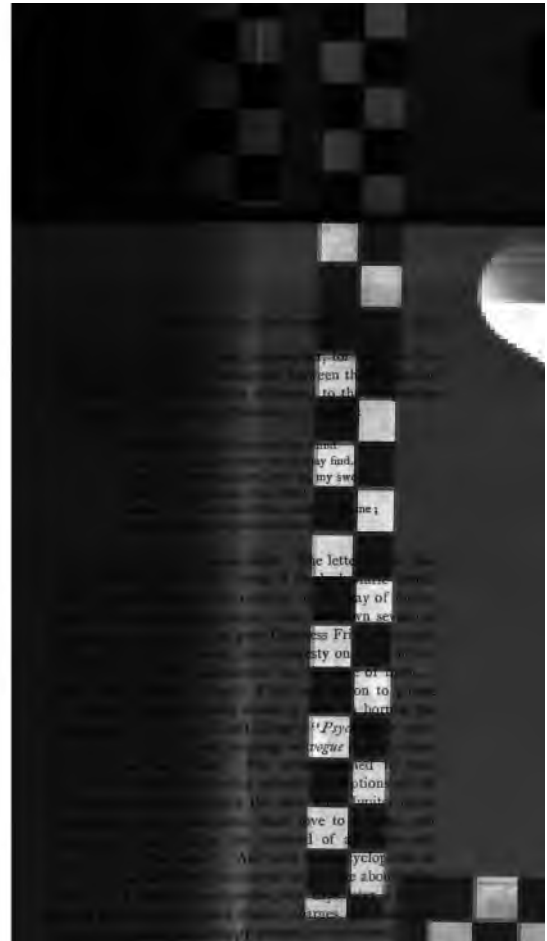
"Lotka—dear grass widow!—complains that you are occasionally untrue to her,—little Prince Oscar is her informant, she says. She questions the children about boudoir secrets whenever she gets a chance."

Here I beg to protest once more that I give only the least offensive instances of the correspondence; if I attempted to stir at all below the surface of the morass, the reader would certainly say I was trying to outdo Rabelais's ring story, which latter, by the way, will never be obsolete at our Court, thanks to the verses Voltaire addressed to Frederick the Great when the latter presented him with a certain jewel.

*"L'anneau de Charle Magne et celui d'Anglique
 Etaient des dons moins précieux,
 Et celui d'Hans Carvel, s'il faut que je m'explique,
 Est le seul, que j'aimasse mieux."*

This pleasantry, though highly enjoyed by Frederick at the time of its delivery, was destined to play a part in the

¹Countess Cosel, mistress of Augustus the Strong, ruined the Electorate of Saxony by spending twenty million Thalers wrung from the people's pockets.









subjects risk their character to help him to run down a traducer whose power for evil he denies? And again: the correspondence did not always concern the person addressed, but frequently related to the passions, the failings, or the misfortunes of others,—an intimate or an enemy. "It would be a felony to turn this letter over to the police, or even to disclose its contents to *you*," said my colleague, Countess Bassewitz, one morning when I was in her apartment and the lackey, who had gone to the porter for her mail, brought in one of the abhorred communications. And her little Ladyship threw the thing, scarcely read, into the fire.

I tried to stop her. "His Majesty, who is sure to learn of the arrival of the missive, may ask you for it at luncheon," I expostulated.

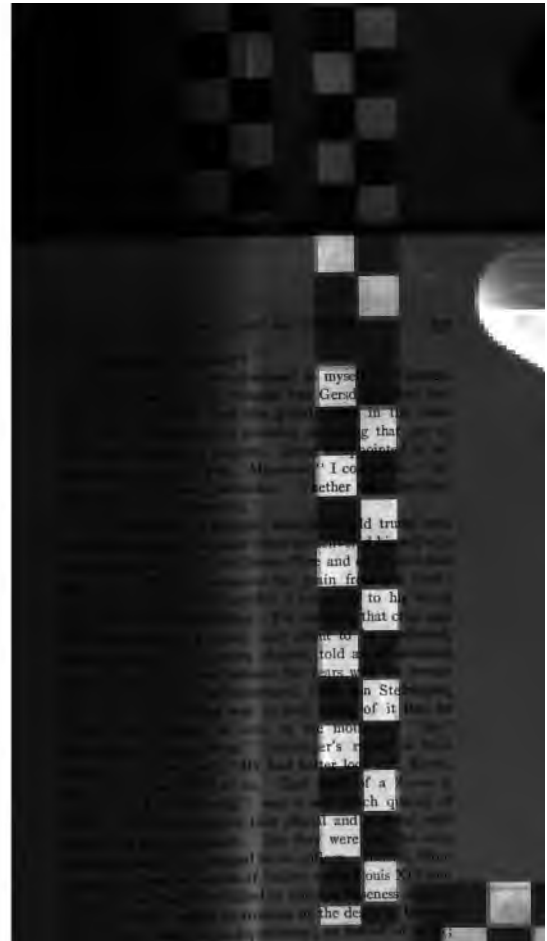
"He cannot, for he has just started on the way to Liebenberg, and if he did, I would resist him, for the letter contained the vilest charge that can be brought against a married woman and her best friend's husband. And all the parties, all four of them, I count among my closest acquaintances!"

"You dear girl," I cried, "you speak of the former governor of our Princes and the Meiningen's *Hofdame*."

Little Miss Innocence had to sit down; my telepathic performance had so shocked her.

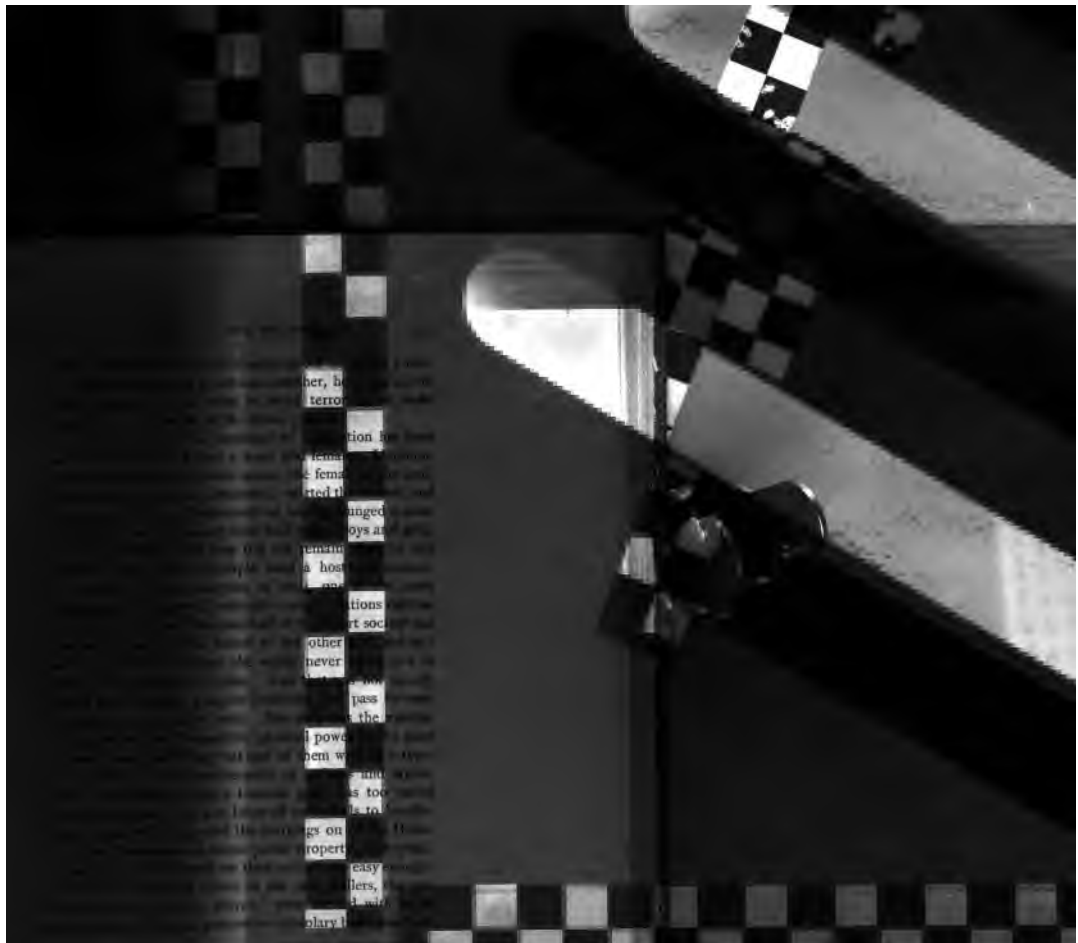
"Major von Falkenhayn and Frau von Berger! What do you know about them?"

"Nothing supernatural, I am sure." The frightened look on the *Gräfin's* pretty face amused me. "The fact is, Herr and Frau von Berger's matrimonial venture proved barren of results until they came to live in Berlin and accepted the Major as *frère et compagnon*,—*Hausfreund* in the broadest sense of the word. Since then the stork has paid annual visits to our colleague."





in the King's vices,"—this terrible indictment fits our present conditions as if it had been written yesterday, instead of a hundred and fifty years ago. And how could it be otherwise? William's surpassing weaknesses—limitless vanity, despotic inclinations, and unrestrained egotism—are echoes of the "*l'état c'est moi*" and "*après nous le déluge*" theories of centuries ago,—albeit more authentic,—and it is death for a courtier, or for a minister of state, not to cater to these idiosyncrasies. Besides, the German noble and idle classes are not one whit better, in point of morality, than those of England, of France, or Russia. In one respect they are worse, I think: they are, without exception, infinite tattlers. Though flattering myself with the endowment of fair observatory capabilities, and though I keep my eyes open as I go along, Berlin society women, I confess, have frequently astonished me by information concerning my master and mistress that I would never dream of noticing, though the affairs mentioned happened under my very nose. And Kaiser and Kaiserin are as bad as the rest. All memoirs of royalty agree that august personages are impassioned gatherers of small gossip; the two Napoleons, the Alexanders, the great Frederick, Joseph II and Louis XV, the Regents of France and of Great Britain,—all had their Poellnitzes and Fouchés, but inherent craftiness, at the same time, kept them from compromising their own thoughts or the conclusions they drew from the information received. My mistress is perhaps too little sophisticated to follow these examples; besides, being a lonely woman, she feels the necessity of an exchange of thoughts. With the Emperor, it is impulsiveness that gets the better of his dignity all the time. His faculties of conception act like piston-rods driven by a powerful engine,—a *perpetuum mobile*, as it were,—and he can never resist the temptation to inform those around him of the current of his



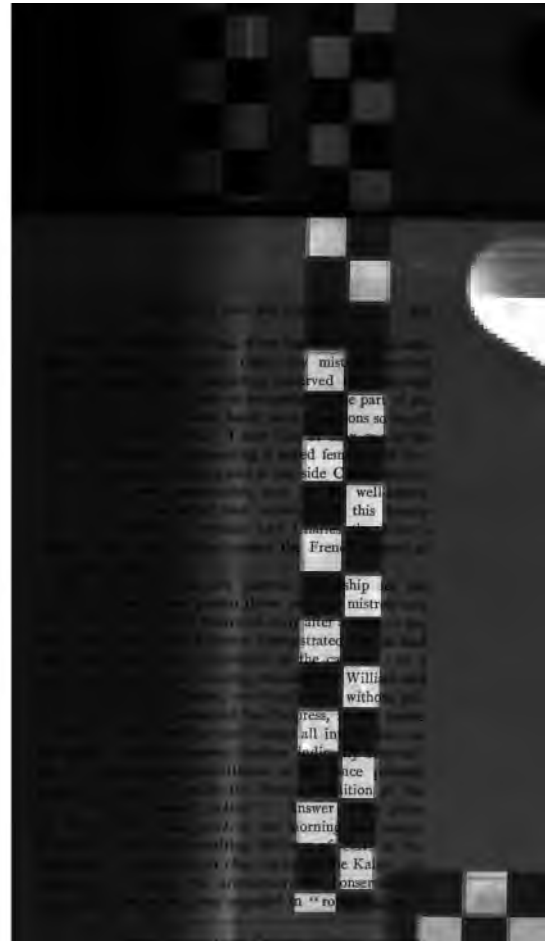


had become contagious, and that the Emperor's mother was right, or pretty nearly right. If the genius of Anarchy had started out to destroy the nation's great by carrying discord and hatred into their midst and by setting one powerful family against the other, he could not have assailed the natural opponents of lawlessness with greater prospect of certainty and despatch. But while all suffered under the reign of terror,—the guillotining, the fusillading, and *noy-ading* of reputations,—none underwent crueller torments at the hands of the vilifier than Auguste Victoria and her cousin morganatic. I must admit, though, that Her Majesty's chagrin at the initial letters was not of long duration. Their form, of course, nauseated the woman, and their text wounded the wife in her, but the baseness of the undertaking itself did not seem to impress the sovereign lady, and from the very beginning she was of opinion that the perpetrator would, nay, must, escape. I often had it on my tongue to inquire into the reason for this assumption, but etiquette forbade.

A circumstance that provoked general discussion was the leniency with which the *anonymus* passed by Duke Günther. His "vocabulary of lasciviousness" had been enriched by only three contributions of the letter-writer, he declared, and these he handed to the Kaiser. They were in keeping with the general run, but contained neither references to His Highness's debts, nor to his mistresses, nor to any other ticklish point in his career; in short, to quote the President of Police, they were "suspiciously harmless."

"If I were unmarried, like you, I should be angry at being treated in this milk-and-water style," said George Radziwill to the Duke once.

"I have never thought of that," Günther is reported to have answered,—an expression that created much surprise at the time.





Stoecker, and Auguste Victoria, who ought to have stood by him, kept silent.

Some time after the receipt of the Stoecker picture, on a beautiful March Sunday (the Emperor was absent just then), Princess Louise drove up while my mistress was having her hair dressed for second breakfast.

"Princess Frederick Leopold?" repeated the Empress, when I made the announcement.

"So the *Kammerdiener* reports, Your Majesty."

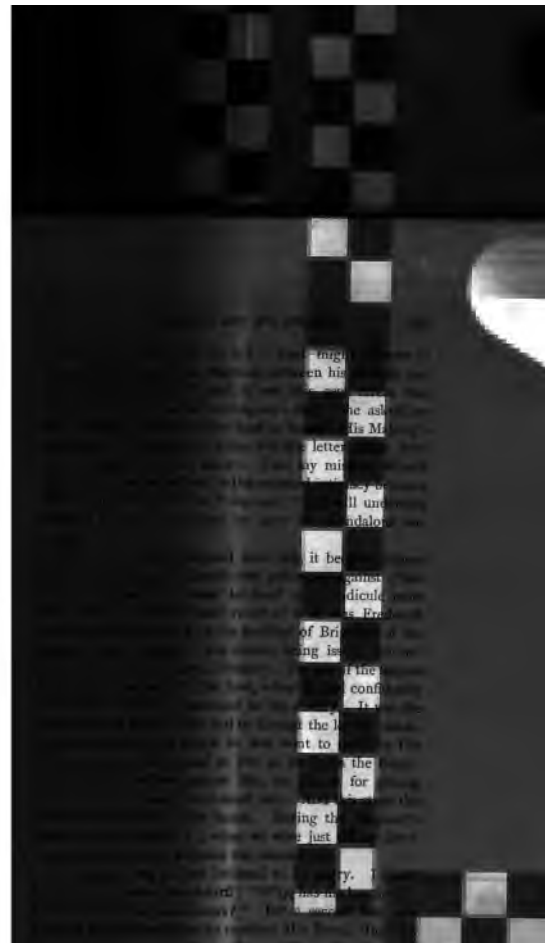
"Something must have happened at Glienecke! Quick, Countess, go ask my sister's pardon, and beg her to come in here," and, turning to her women, Her Majesty added: "You may retire for the present."

The Kaiser and Frederick Leopold had not been on good terms for some time, and the royal sisters, who, of course, take sides with their husbands, had seen each other at stated occasions only during the past year. This explains my mistress's surmise that something was amiss.

Princess Louise was never handsome, but she looked a fright that morning. Her eyes were red and her face was blotched. "You must send everybody from the room and antechamber before I begin to speak to Her Majesty," she said.

The subject of conversation between the sisters was an anonymous note.

"If you want to know why Frederick Leopold calls you a woman of the second class, consult your mirror when you go to bed to-night, and compare your reflection with the torso I enclose. The photograph was made by your husband—from life. What a charming model 'Lotka' makes! See the sweet abandonment of her figure! behold the slope of her royal shoulders, the firm bosoms! Ah, the von der Decken is not fool enough to suckle her children as you and your sister do. No wonder Frederick Leopold honors her by the title of 'woman of the first class,'" etc.





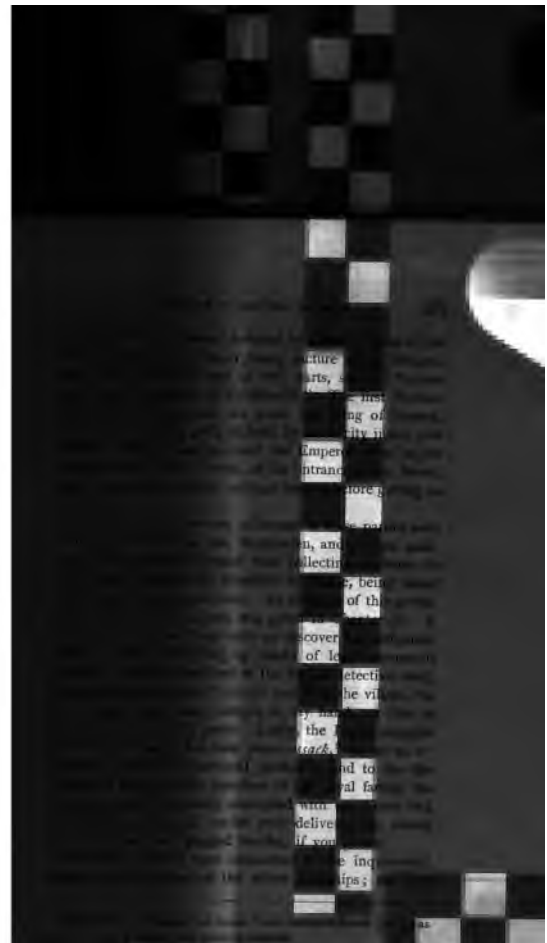
changed her mind, and went to the Shell Hall to intercept Frederick Leopold, if possible. But meanwhile the bird had flown. It happened this way. As soon as the servant had withdrawn to announce him, Frederick Leopold asked the porter whether this was not Her Majesty's luncheon hour.

"At Your Royal Highness's orders,—yes," answered the fat functionary.

The Prince thereupon threw his card into the porter's face with the words: "If that be so, I will not incommode the Kaiserin," and, addressing his coachman, he cried: "*Fort!*" (away!). The driver seemed to have waited for the signal, and, giving his horses whip and rein, started off at breakneck speed. By the time Her Majesty appeared in the vestibule the carriage was approaching Sans Souci.

It was a preconcerted game, of course. Leopold knew the very minute when we should sit down to table. He correctly guessed that Her Majesty would receive him, nevertheless, and, after inducing her to come out and meet him, cried "April-fool," and vamosed with the aid of the excellent horseflesh for which his stable is famous.

But while the highest in the land were pestered, their closest friends did not escape, particularly the women who, as narrated in chapters XIII and XIV, were just then fighting for supremacy in William's affections. Indeed, the letter-writing fiend was responsible for most of the occasional spats between Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze, for he kept each rival posted on the other's triumphs or discomforts. To-day Madame von Kotze was apprised that Fritz Hohenau did not pay for *all* the diamonds his wife wore at the *Grand Cour*, and to-morrow Charlotte had it, on the best of authority, that William was more than Godfather to Her Excellency's infant. And the photographic assaults these pretty ladies suffered!

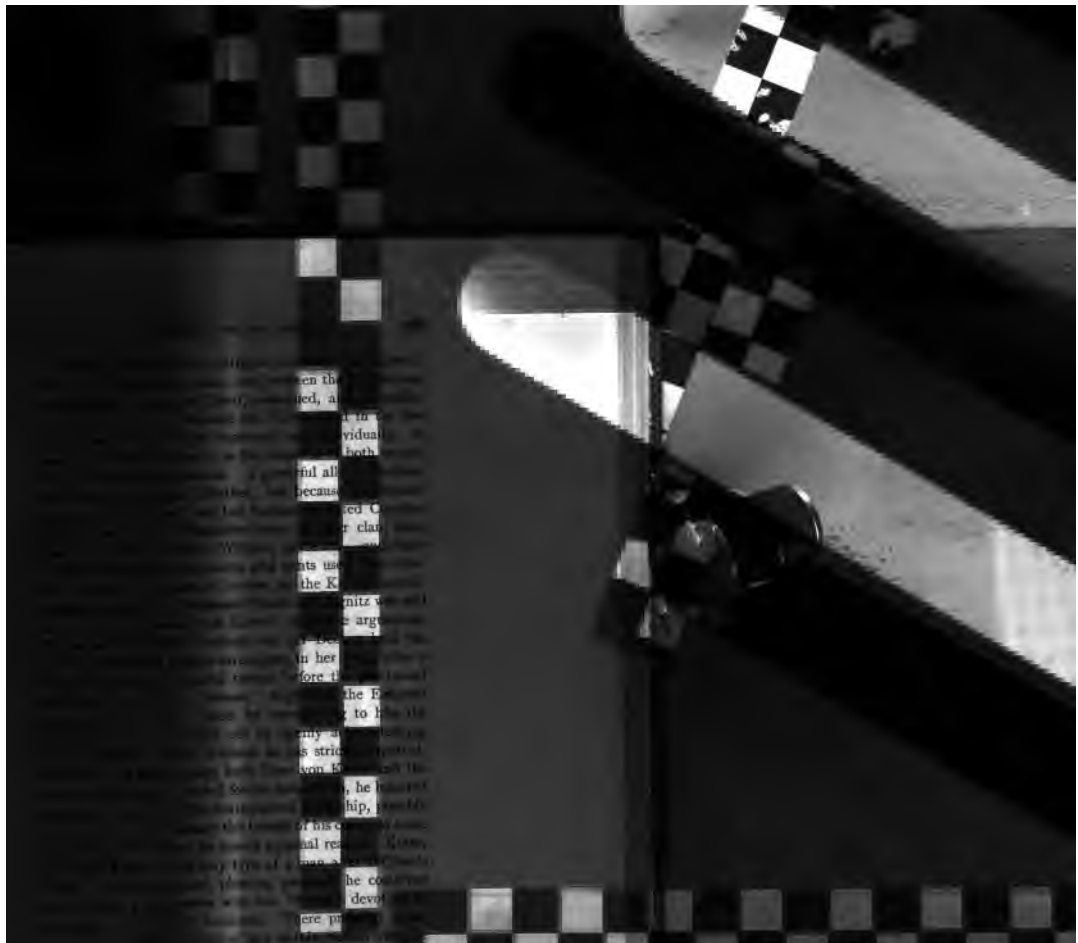




examinations were odious, though conducted in a dignified manner, but not infrequently part of the evidence became public property, viz.: when Herr von Tausch thought it well to give information to the press, and such bad faith was intolerable. It was this disloyal policy—a freak developed by William's Lombroso studies—that drove so many great families to withdraw from Court. The princely houses of Stolberg and Carolath, the Duke of Sagan, Herr von Tiele-Winckler, the Maltzans, Perponchers, Harrachs and others had no ambition to see their palaces fired so that William might boil a couple of eggs in the ashes of their good name.

For the whole inquiry, strictly speaking, turned on the everlasting theme of "insult to Majesty."

"Eine Rotte waterlandsloser Gesellen" (a band of unpatriotic scoundrels)—His Majesty's favorite term for characterizing his enemies—had dared to carry its intrigues to the steps of the throne (William would never admit that they had invaded his very bedroom); *ergo*, all society must rise to rid him of these nuisances. That the paladins upon whom he called were quite busy defending their own firesides, and were forced to leave their families unprotected while they followed his invitation; that, moreover, by placing their correspondence at his disposal, they jeopardized their wives' and daughters' fair names, their own and their sons' honor,—what mattered that? Somebody had interfered with the master's pleasure; it was in the nature of things that everybody else should suffer. Besides, there had arisen a contingency, the existence of which was suspected by a few in the inner circle only: the authorship of many letters, especially those sent out the first twelvemonth, had been traced to a member of the royal family. If one or more of his imitators were brought to bay, the tracks of the original *anonymus* could be covered up for good.





thousands per annum to entertain His Majesty. In short, he lived for the royal master only. I remember meeting him *Unter den Linden* one fine morning, his cousin, Count Haeseler, commander of the Fifteenth Army Corps, being my escort.

"My dear Leberecht," cried the General, after the usual greetings, "why, by all the saints, do you wear a grass-green cravat?"

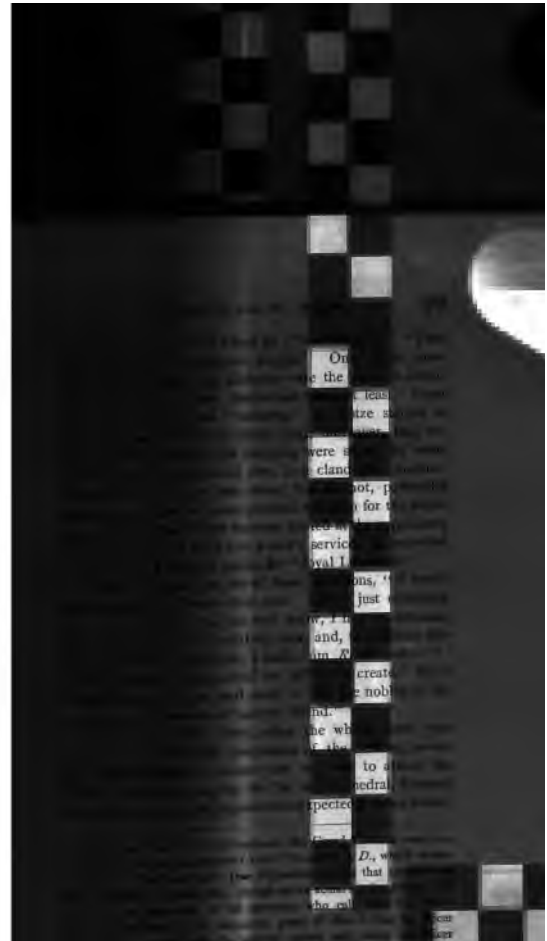
"You forget, cousin," replied Kotze, with an injured look, "a green cravat is most appropriate to-day. His Majesty went a-hunting this morning."

And all of a sudden it was whispered that this humble servant of the fetich royal,—he who would have worn *coulleur de caca de Prince Royal* with as much avidity as *coulleur de chasse*,—the amiable *viveur*, distinguished comrade, officer of splendid record for integrity and loyalty,—it was rumored that this man, noted for a certain amount of horse-sense, but an ignoramus on all topics unconnected with the humdrum existence of a man of fashion,—that Kotze, who was no more addicted to the pen than to overalls, was the anonymous graphomaniac for whom we had been searching so long. One fine morning the report was on everybody's lips,—no one knew who first uttered the calumny.

It was Hervey, author of "Memoirs of the Court of George II," who gave form to the truism:

"Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds
An easy entrance to ignoble minds,"

and he had been a politician and courtier long enough to get to the root of Court intrigues. Exclamations such as: "Pst! Kotze will hear you," "I let it out to Leberecht, it will be in the anonymous letters to-morrow," became all at





and walking up to Auguste Victoria's master of ceremony, invited him to come outside. Taking the captain's entrance for the signal of their Majesties' coming (we had left them in Potsdam that morning), we ladies advanced toward the great staircase, at the head of which we saw Kotze in earnest conversation with the Chief of the Military Cabinet.

"Are you not going?" I whispered, in passing.

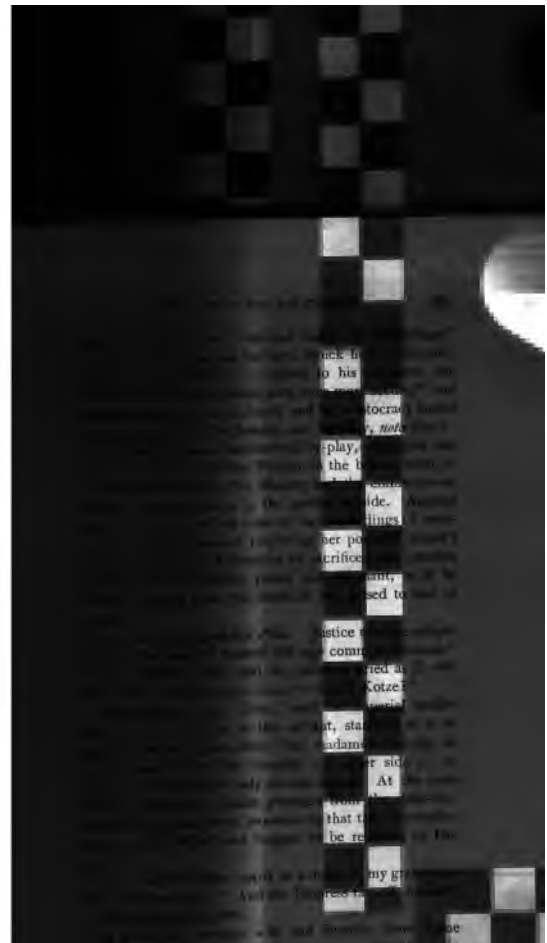
"No," he answered, with a strange tremor in his voice;

"please make my excuses to Countess Brockdorff; I shall be detained."

Ten minutes later the news spread that, upon receiving proof of Kotze's perfidy by means of a report delivered to him while on the way to Berlin, the Kaiser had signed a warrant for his arrest in the *Fürstenszimmer* of *Potsdamer Bahnhof* and had sent von Hahnke ahead to apprehend the culprit so as to avoid meeting him at the festivities. That these details were correct I learned in the course of the evening from Baroness von Reischach, *née* Princess Ratibor, wife of Empress Frederick's Court-marshal. Her Grace had it from her brother Franz, Major in the First Guard Dragoons and one of Kotze's most outspoken enemies.

Prince Franz, a middle-aged bachelor, had sprung into sudden prominence of late,—he and his *ablatus*, Herr von Schrader, the Kaiser's master of ceremony. Baron Schrader, it was soon learned, had denounced his colleague to the investigating board, and finally had brought formal charges against Kotze, submitting them to His Majesty on the morning of the cathedral celebration. General opinion at Court and in society was, of course, against the accused man. I say "of course," for distrust is a plant of rapid growth in an atmosphere where the praise of the lord's doings is one's best recommendation.

Her Majesty professed to be entirely unnerved by the shock; "she would never get over having associated so





for fear of being recognized), her avenger stalked into the palace-yard in the shape of a letter-carrier, bringing mis-sives in the dreaded imitated print for both Kaiser and Kaiserin and many dignitaries. *Anonymus redivivus* paid his compliments to their Majesties and their Excellencies and called them names for being so stupid as to incarcerate such an innocent, a man whom only petty spite or gross incompetency could connect with a crime that called for much ready wit and a dare-devil spirit excusable only "in the highest spheres, if not the all-highest."

"Take my word for it," concluded each epistle, "before three weeks have passed, 'Loloki' will be obliged to open Kotze's prison doors and beg him, by all that is sacred to the royalist, to hold his tongue."

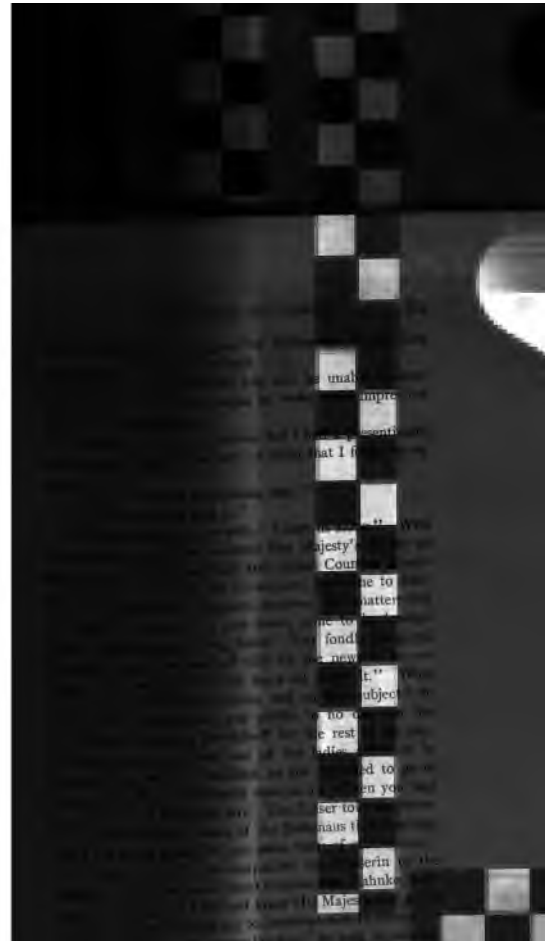
We must now recall some incidents that happened in April, shortly after their Majesties' return from Italy.

Ever since the close of the carnival season when she enjoyed her customary triumphs at the Emperor's side, Charlotte Hohenau had been bombarded by a succession of anonymous letters of the vilest description, but the mis-sives left at her door after the re-establishment of the Court in Potsdam were not only vicious, but ominous to an alarming extent.

"'Loloki's' wife has got the better of you," wrote the mysterious scribe on April 10; "the Emperor will not kiss your arm ten days from now, for you will not be allowed to celebrate your thirty-first birthday in Berlin."

On April 13, after a parade at Tempelhofer Feld, His Majesty ordered Fritz Hohenau, *Rittmeister* of the First Guard Dragoons, to report to him. "I hereby transfer you to Hannover for one year, the order to take effect at once," he addressed Cousin Fritz, in his usual pompous style.

"At your Majesty's orders," replied Hohenau, without moving a muscle. The Kaiser looked at him in astonishment.





"So, so," nodded the Empress. She had not expected to meet the chief, and was hunting for words, as she always does, when confronted by a thing unusual.

"And I dare say, among my papers is one Your Majesty will heartily approve of," resumed Hahnke, with a lurking expression about his eyes. And as Her Majesty made no immediate answer, he added, lowering his voice: "the shifting of Fritz Hohenau to Hannover."

"Indeed, I heard of it. They had quite a scene about it on Tempelhofer Feld yesterday." The Kaiserin was now at her ease. "Your Excellency will take a seat in my car," she said, "and you, too, Countess, as Bassewitz does not seem to be coming. I must not be left alone with this gay soldier and Madame von Brockdorff." (Countess Bassewitz was the lady who had asked to be excused from luncheon.)

Once seated in the train, Herr von Hahnke became quite talkative, and I am indebted to his conversation for several facts concerning the anonymous letters mentioned in the foregoing pages. On the question of the moment, viz.: who might be the author of the last anonymous letter to the Hohenaus? he speculated long and laboriously.

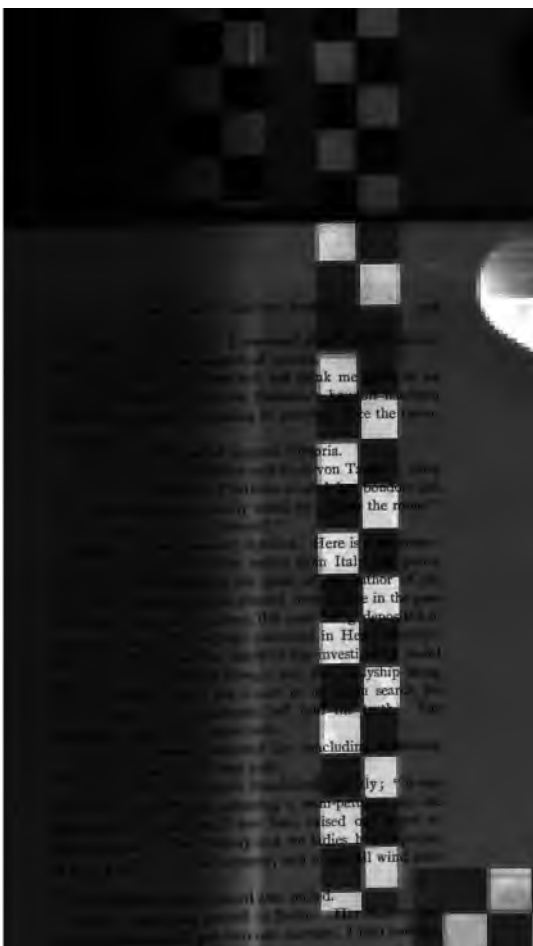
"Thank God, I knew nothing of the proposed change," he said, in conclusion, "otherwise His Majesty might think me the tattler."

"Absurd!" cried the Empress, with a show of impatience; "but let that pass. What do you think His Majesty is doing in Berlin to-day?"

"As I had the honor to submit, the Kaiser has not been pleased to inform me of his intended trip."

"Then I will turn tale-bearer: at this moment he is probably in the boudoir of Countess Fritz."

"I beg my sovereign lady's pardon a thousand times; not in the *boudoir*!"





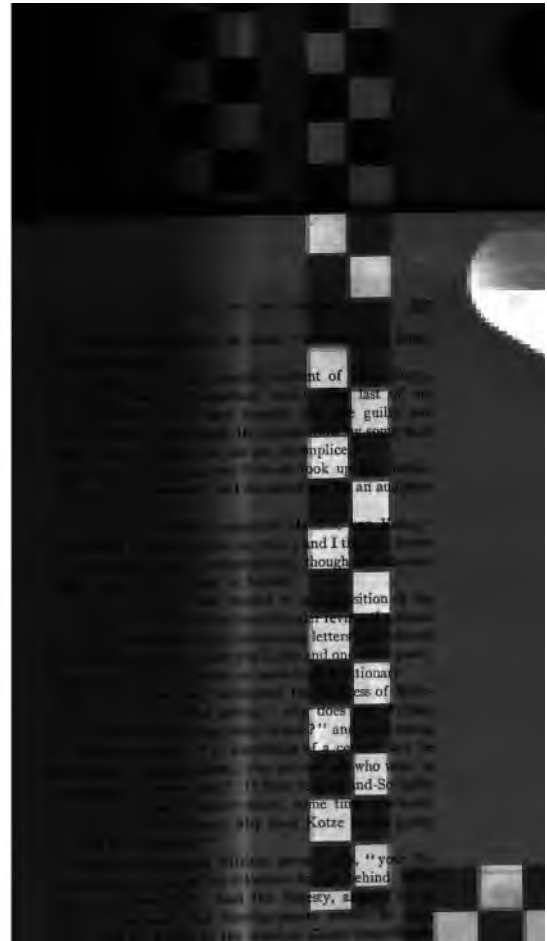
As I prepared to take the train for Potsdam in the evening, a footman in the blue and yellow livery of the Schleswig-Holsteins approached. "His Highness invites Your Ladyship to his coupé," he said: "His Highness is going to the Neues Palais." The man conducted me to a first-class apartment, in front of which stood the usual carpeted stairs. I found Duke Günther enveloped in cigarette smoke, discussing the evening papers with his Court-marshal, Herr von Budenbrock.

"Gnädigste Gräfin," he cried, "charmed to have your company. Lots of news to tell, though not from these," and he kicked the *Tageblatt* and *Post* under the seat; "they are as empty of real interest as usual."

I made some commonplace reply, and thanked His Highness for his courtesy. "Nonsense," he said, good-naturedly, "the obligation is entirely on my side. I am going to tell you a story which you must repeat to my sister immediately upon your arrival at the palace. You can see her in her dressing-room and I cannot, and I want Her Majesty to be posted before she comes to table."

Then, without preamble, he added: "Do you know what happened when the Kaiser visited the Hohenau this morning? He was in civilian dress, and, to make the surprise complete, rode in a *Droschke*. But, arrived at Bellevue Strasse, he found the servants lining the staircase, and 'Lotka' *en grande tenue*—low corsage, bare arms, diamonds, bouquet and all—awaiting him. The *anonymus*, through the usual channel, had announced this visit, arranged with so much secrecy!"

Let us now revert to the happenings of the June morning that saw Madame von Kotze's deepest humiliation. If the anonymous correspondent, by the letters mailed twenty-four hours after the *Ceremonienmeister's* arrest, had hoped to benefit poor Kotze, this calculation went wide of the mark,





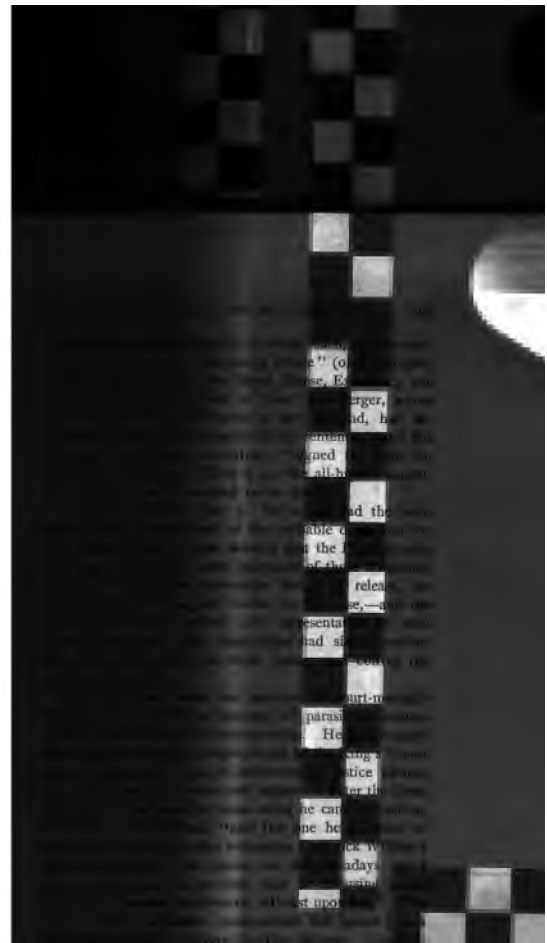
at these marks," cried William, in a voice pregnant with turgid solemnity; "the impression of the word 'Loloki' in imitated Latin print, the brand we all know to our sorrow. What does Your Royal Highness say now?" he concluded, bowing to his sister.

"That the news is important, if true," answered Princess Charlotte, flippantly, but she added, as if suddenly aware that she had gone too far: "I mean, if it can be proved that Kotze used the blotters."

"He was not only the last, but the only gentleman to sit at the desk on the morning the discovery was made; besides, more blotters, similarly inscribed, were found in Kotze's private office in the Schloss." His Majesty's face beamed with self-complacency while he made this statement. He acted, every inch, the famous barrister summing up an important case.

On the half-dozen pieces of blotting-paper and the hearsay evidence alluded to, the prosecution rested its case before the court-martial which presently assembled to try Kotze; but even this scanty bit of incriminating material was quickly reduced by one-half, the most important half too: the government's expert in hand-writing declared that the supposed impressions were made on the blotters with pen and ink, the letters being placed upside down, presumably in order to mislead. This would have been accepted as *prima-facie* evidence of a conspiracy to ruin the defendant by manufactured evidence in any court of law, but the court-martial thought otherwise. It decided to ignore the blotters, and found Kotze guilty on the hearsay evidence alone.

When the first news of this strange sentence *par ordre de Mufti* reached the military prison in Linden Strasse, where *Rittmeister* von Kotze had been incarcerated for nearly a month, the warden shook his head. "His





some slight objection to the special honors designed for Kotze, but His Majesty cut her short by a rhapsody on the blind goddess. His present declaration is for the benefit of the Schrader-Hohenau-Ratibor coterie. The Kaiser will have no more of their accusations and inventions."

Indeed not; and notice was served to outsiders as well. The *Reichsanzeiger* published a decree, forthwith ordering a new trial by another branch of the army, "the Third Corps." The disowned Guards had to declare Kotze's honor intact, while at the same time the Hannoverian Lancers, to which regiment Baron Schrader belonged, censured the latter for accusing a brother officer. Now followed a series of duels, in which Herr von Kotze alternately maimed his traducers and was maimed himself, culminating in the famous Schrader-Kotze combat that left His Majesty's informant on the field, a dead man.

During all that time, and up to this very day, the Kotzes did not come to Court, though formally invited as of old: Madame von Kotze could never get over that brutal scene in the billiard-room,—“never, *jamais*, and if I live a hundred years.” And William's little attentions—the sending of Easter eggs, of bottles of Steinberger Cabinet, of photographs, all duly advertised in the newspapers—worked no change in this attitude of proud unapproachableness. “She demands not only public avowal of her husband's innocence on your part, but that the real culprit's name be divulged, as that seems to be the only way of punishing him!” The above is the ever-recurring refrain of Princess Charlotte's correspondence with the Emperor, “Mrs. Meiningen” having charge of the *rapprochement* proceedings and conducting them with great tact and kindness. A staunch friend was Her Royal Highness to the Kotzes all through their prosecution. She kept open house for them in town and out during their sorest trials, and in every

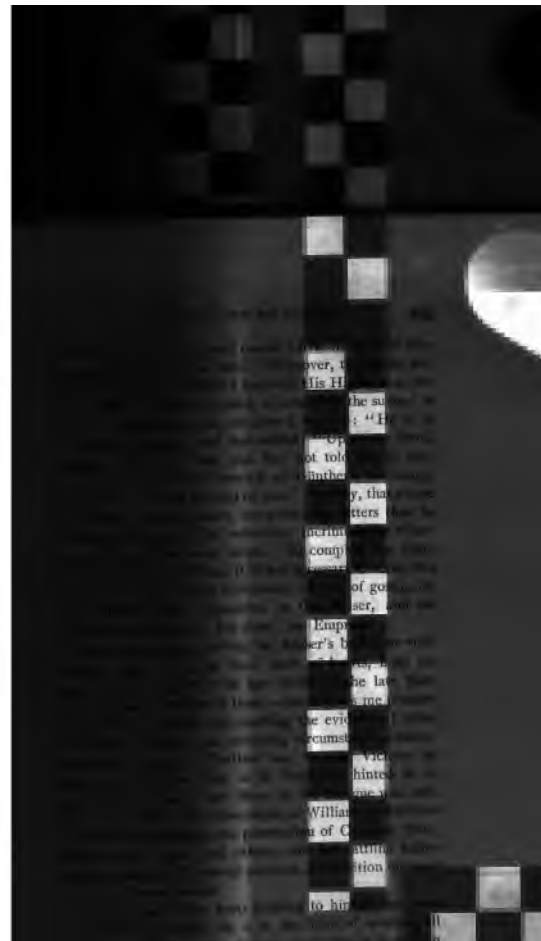




hours with him day by day. Günther, you know, left the country in the spring of 1893 under a cloud, a cloud formed by the smoke of burned stationery; namely, a gross or so of anonymous letters of the style described, and the authorship of which had been traced to His Highness by *Herren* von Richthofen and von Tausch. Then the Empress had come forward, offering to send her brother around the world on condition that those incriminating letters be turned over to her. They were—after they had been photographed.

And now this hopeful ne'er-do-well, after many promises of reform, had come back, and almost simultaneously recommenced the exploitation of the Kaiser and Kaiserin's most intimate sayings and doings, such as exchanges of confidences and of promises affecting the official status of certain persons. The letters saying that Countess Fritz would not celebrate her thirty-first birthday in Berlin, that Hohenau would be removed to Hannover, and, last but not least, that the Emperor would visit Her Ladyship on a certain morning, were specimens of the kind. We have the Kaiser's word for it, that the first two statements were based on disclosures made to Her Majesty, and to her alone, and that William's proposed visit to Charlotte von der Decken was kept a secret is evident from General von Hahnke's words. To the Empress alone William divulged his intention, probably with a view of adding to her discomfort. Thereupon, as reported in these papers, Her Majesty locked herself in her room and saw no one but her brother and her grand-mistress for the rest of the day and evening.

Rejecting even the possibility of Countess Brockdorff's participation in the intrigue, suspicion points directly to Duke Günther as the *anonymus*. He was imperial Auguste Victoria's only *confident*, kept her posted about all the Kaiser's carryings on, and on his part examined into the

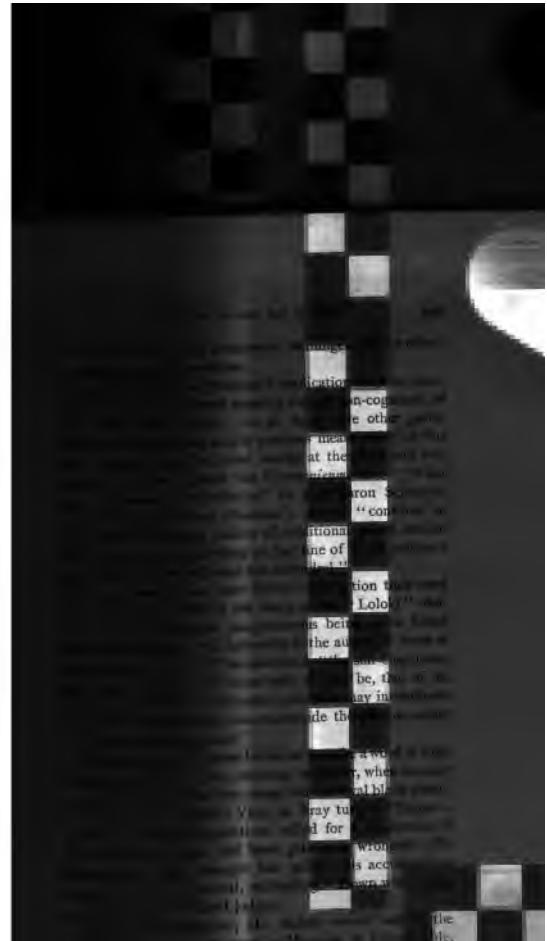




William, then, supplied Auguste Victoria with all the scandals going, adding his personal observations and an outline of his intentions and decisions; the Kaiserin furnished the news to Günther, and Günther, not to be outdone, related to his sister the small talk about William and his favorites. The ducal store-house of both Majesties' secrets finally utilized them for his own purpose: to annoy his sister's rivals and to play tricks on His Majesty. And if there was a surplus, he disposed of it where it would do the most harm: among the intriguers so plentiful in the idle classes.

The first batch of anonymous letters was intended by His Highness as a sort of ante-carnival joke after the revel in Castle Grunewald, but, seeing he hit the bull's-eye, he fired another, a third, a fourth, ten, twenty, a hundred shots in quick succession, all the time persuading himself that he was working in the interest of his much-abused sister. Then imitators arose, first a few, later on a host of them, until, in the end, "one-half of Berlin society was writing scurrilous notes to the other." Ultimately the Duke had to "absquatulate," or, to use a less high-sounding term, had to take leg-bail, and Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze enjoyed a brief spell of freedom from what seemed to be a perennial annoyance, though there were plenty of good friends left to give them an occasional dig. When His Highness had run to the end of his Cook's ticket, the old game started anew, the letter alleging that Countess Hohenau had interrogated the Kaiser's children about happenings in the imperial bed-chamber having set the ball rolling.

I confess that it took me quite a long while to get to the bottom of the intrigue; that some such solution would be forthcoming I had suspected from the beginning, and even if I had been royalty's most trusting toady, the evidence accumulating before my eyes on the one hand, and various

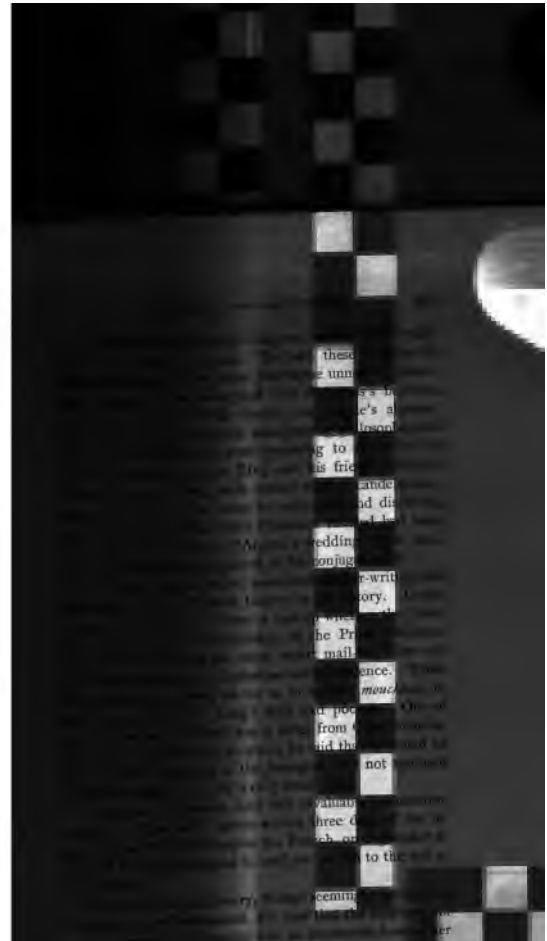




d'Orleans and a Mademoiselle Florence, had been Duke Günther's amanuensis, putting the pepper and salt, the mustard and cress, into the letters. She was forthwith conducted to the frontier by two trusted members of the political police and warned never to show her face again in Berlin. This piquant little woman had been devoted to the Duke for two years, and had often helped to entertain His Majesty,—we met her once shuffling her lace petticoats above a centre-table in Castle Grunewald,—but now all her protests went for naught. As to His Highness, he was given to understand that he would not be tolerated in Berlin or Potsdam for more than a week at a time. The Emperor would not allow him to open a new establishment in the capital or neighborhood, and threatened to turn him adrift if he disobeyed.

The mystery as to who accused Günther in letters addressed to Countess Hohenau and the police has remained as unfathomable as that respecting the identity of the falsifiers of the "Loloki" blotters. Many think the Princess of Meiningen indited those epistles, but whether there is for this surmise more substantial evidence than Her Highness's partisanship I am unable to say. An old friend of Empress Frederick suggests that the balance of inferential proofs inclines to Charlotte as much as to the police, who may have employed this method in preference to advising the Emperor directly of his brother-in-law's repeated offence. The Hohenzollerns have always been mischief-makers, privately as well as politically, and that trick of the *anonymus* to affix the heads of persons to be lampooned to lay-figures in disgusting attitudes is but an old idea borrowed from the Sans Souci archives, which report that Frederick the Great ordered scenes painted from the lascivious volume *Thérèse Philosophe*,¹ the *dramatis personæ*

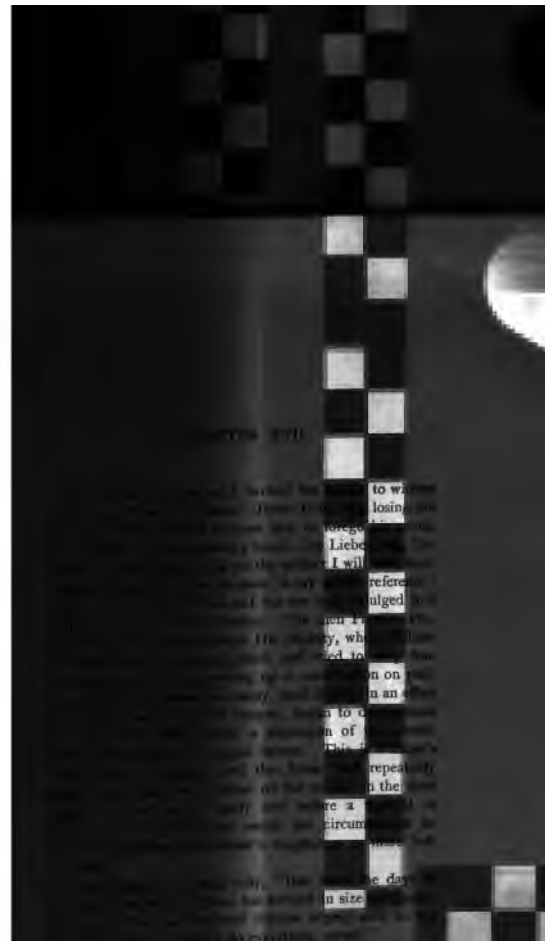
¹ The authorship of this vile book has been imputed alternately to the King and to Voltaire.





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related offer the only lucid explanation for the continuance of the nuisance. The poisonous rags ceased coming for a short span of time toward the end of 1894, but the Kaiser's intended holiday present to Uncle Chlodwig from the "Disposition Fund" roused the *anonymus* to renewed activity during the Christmas season of that year, and he has kept it up ever since. To mention a recent date, it was that same scribbling fiend who forced Ambassador Herbertte to retire from Berlin in 1896 by reports of alleged intimate relations between William and Madame l'Ambassadrice.





Under the lash of this remark the Premier paled. "Your Majesty led me to believe that you placed some slight trust in my abilities," he said.

"I never opined that you were a Bismarck, and nothing in your past career convinces me that you are," cried the Emperor, stamping his foot impatiently. "And now," he continued, "with your permission, His Majesty will go to his room."

Philip Eulenburg advanced to conduct him, but the Kaiser motioned him aside. "It is your cousin's place. Send for my grand-master!" and as the latter was not on hand, he insisted upon going unattended.

Botho was beside himself with rage, and bitterly reproached his relatives for enticing him to this meeting. On the spur of the moment he wrote out his resignation, but found the Kaiser in a temporizing mood next morning.

In similar manner the retirement of other ministers of state has been allowed to take place. The majority went out after a row, like wronged menials in a badly-managed household. Indeed, the Kaiser looks upon them as servants and not only through his divine-right spectacles. From Chancellor to the last of the Secretaries, he treats them as *Handlanger*.¹

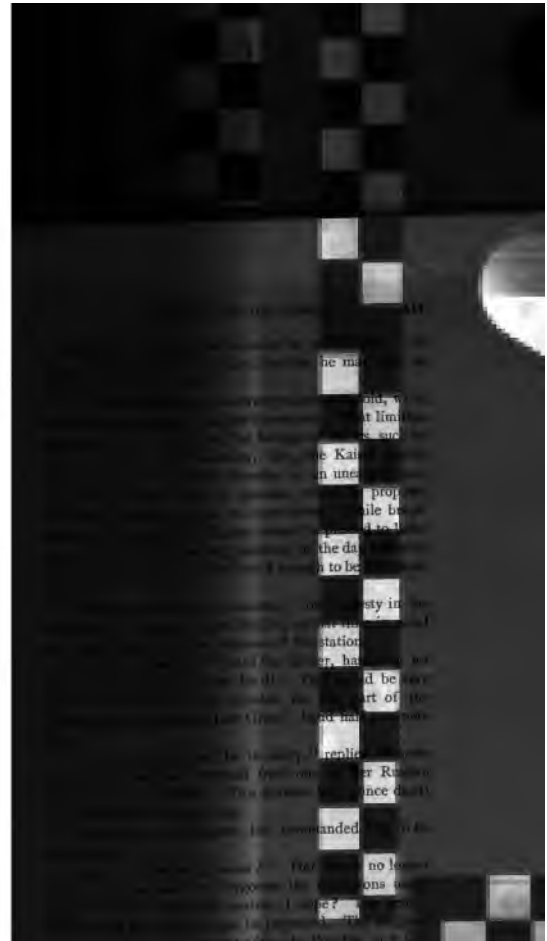
Almost every day, when the Kaiser is at home, we hear this sort of dialogue at table:

Her Majesty to the Emperor: "You are going to Berlin" (or Potsdam) "to-morrow?"

His Majesty: "Exactly so." (*Ironically*) "You saw that in the calendar?"

The Empress: "Yes, but I thought Uncle Chlodwig" (or Herr Miquel) "was coming with his report."

¹ "Unskilled help." In 1897 William designated Bismarck as having been his grandfather's *Handlanger*.





agreement that I thought it bungled in transmission. His Majesty merely meant to ask Chlodwig to have the paper in Potsdam early in the morning, I calculated, and so I brought it to you. It is all right, is it not?"

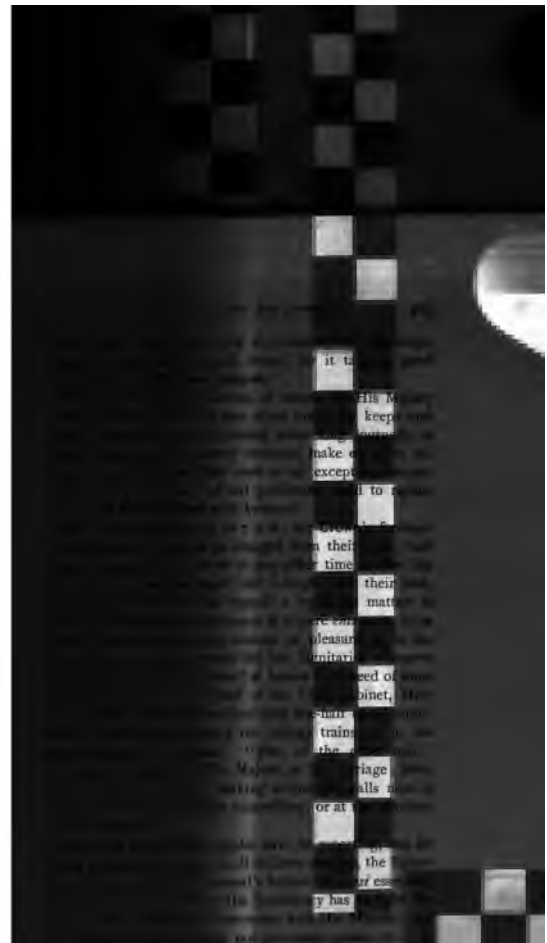
What could the Kaiser do but put on a good face? "I am sure my gracious aunt always is," he replied, "though these proceedings are unusual, of course, and discipline, you know —"

"You are joking, William. Such considerations held good with Herr von Caprivi. They are odious among equals. Now will you relieve me of this document?"

"I am a thousand times obliged, *ma table*" (the Kaiser raised his voice for the benefit of his adjutants, who had remained at the door), "and" (speaking still louder) "I am sorry to hear that Uncle Chlodwig is not well. Moltke will attend you to the palace, and I hope to find you there at dinner. *Au revoir*—we have kept the train waiting long enough. Dona will be charmed to see you."

The Empress was indeed glad, especially when she learned that the meeting with "Willie" had passed off so well. I have the minutes of the conversation from Her Majesty, on whom, by the way, the sarcasm of Her Grace as well as the forced courtesy that characterized the Emperor's remarks were lost.

The Hohenlohes can do these things, of course, but a Miquel, Schoenstedt, Thielmann, a Hammerstein and the rest, have to obey the most outrageous demands unless prepared to be bounced like drunken valets. In winter the gentlemen must be at His Majesty's disposal from 7 A.M. till 12 midnight: in summer he often invites them to report as early as half-past five or six o'clock. If the command appoints the time of the third cock's crow, the poor Excellency has to get up between four and five in the morning, as he must be in grand costume, gold-embroidered





latter delivers his reports at any opportune hour: while William is in his tub, before he gets up in the morning, or after he has retired. If for some reason or other Hahnke is not of the party, he must communicate with the adjutant *du jour* day by day as to the proper time to run up to Hubertusstock, Rominton, Kiel, or other places to perform his duty.

Those are trying days for Prussian and German Secretaries of State, when, as Leberecht Kotze remarked, "it is most appropriate to wear a grass-green cravat." The palace cronies say: "A minister who likes his job will keep an ear to the telephone, one eye upon the clock, and another upon the time-table," when His Majesty hunts in the immediate neighborhood of the Neues Palais, for, if the weather turns out unexpectedly cold, or if His Majesty has the earache, as is frequently the case in winter, he will abandon the chase, and, nothing else being on hand, devote the time to work. Over the wires fly the words: "His Majesty commands Herr Miquel" (Herr *von* Miquel now), "Graf von Posadowsky," "the Minister of Agriculture," or "of Railways," to be at the Neues Palais at a given hour. Or a ring at the 'phone, and the momentous "*Ich befehle*" (the courteous phrase with which William opens every conversation over the wire) throws the state offices on Wilhelm Strasse and Unter den Linden into momentary confusion.

And when their Excellencies, often four or five of them, and the secretaries bearing the *portefeuilles*, arrive at Wildpark, the royal coachman frequently reports that His Majesty has meanwhile changed his mind a second time and has taken to the field, expecting to return in two or four or maybe six or eight hours. So the busy gentlemen trot home again, sometimes to be recalled from Berlin shortly afterward. In the winter of 1896 this happened twice to





what they have to say. At the same time I will order Miquel to promise me to remain in office. His offer of resignation I have declined, at all events."

"Indeed," sighed the Empress. Her Majesty hated Miquel as the most formidable foe of the pious measure among office-holders.

When, fifteen minutes later, I drove down the Linden, I found that grand thoroughfare alive with people. The chasseurs and grooms, riding in all directions to drum together His Majesty's evening party from palaces, hotels, and apartment-houses, had alarmed the town in the neighborhood of the Schloss, and as my coupé stopped at the Bristol,¹ the mob, recognizing the royal livery, burst into cheers, which, however, gave way to "Ohs" and "Pshaws" when my nonentity, instead of the monarch's august person, hove into actual vision. In front of Count Zedlitz's palace stood at least a dozen policemen, and mounted *Schutzmänner* were riding up and down the left side of the avenue.

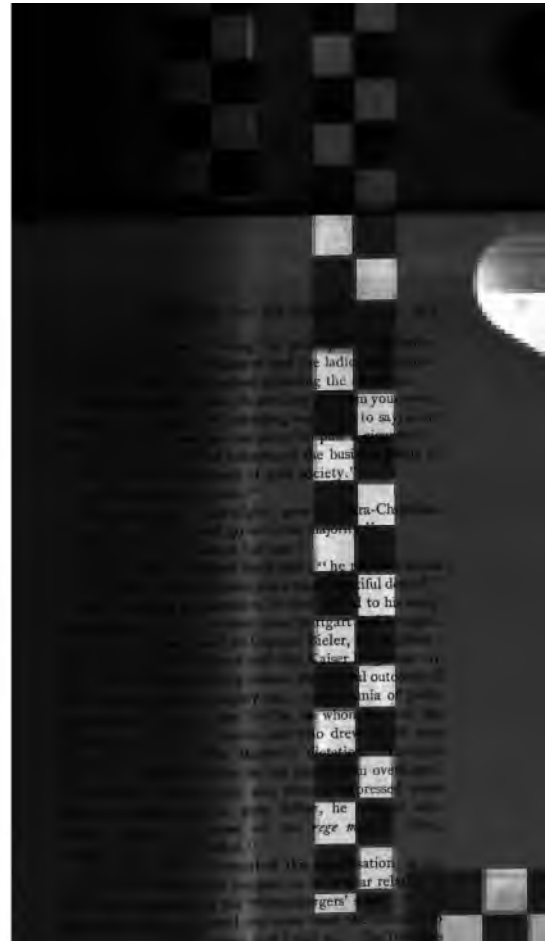
I stepped briskly into the hotel, and had no sooner reached my friend's room, when deafening sounds of "Hochs" and "Hurrahs" called both of us to the window.

There was His Majesty in a splendid victoria, a new gray overcoat thrown over his General's uniform, the shining helmet adding to his height. "See how he struts and bids for adulation. He reminds me —"

I caught my friend, once a *Hofdame* to Queen Marie of Bavaria, by the arm. "Pst! these hotel walls have ears."

Next day the Württembergers arrived. Parades, processions, receptions, and in the evening a gala performance

¹ Next door to the Ministry of Cult.





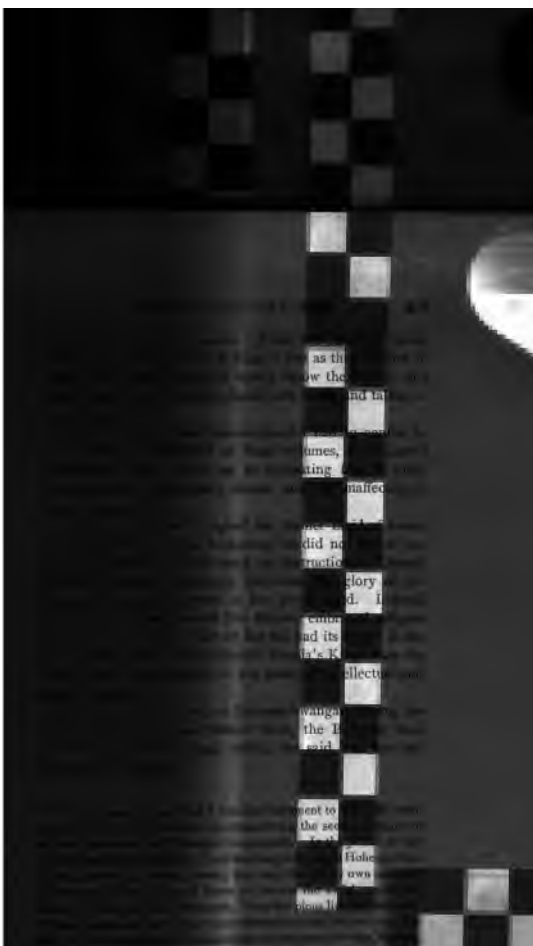
was her piqued retort, "and if they coincide with my own views, so much more credit to woman's acumen. I have not acted *souffreuse* to *König* Wilhelm, I assure you."

I perceived the Baroness was angered by those doubts of mine, born out of a half-hearted attempt to disbelieve what came so near the truth. To humor her, I asked her about the hapless son of her late mistress. At first Her Ladyship refused on the plea of "sparing my patriotic feelings," but consented after a while.

"I was never more struck by the likeness the Kaiser bears to the late Ludwig in manners and attitude," she said, "than when I saw him alight from his carriage a few evenings ago, and I was going to remark something of that sort when you stopped me: the same *grandezza* of walk and gesture, the same studied pose of the head, face and eyes, signifying deep thought, evidently with the intention of impressing the multitude; the resemblance is as extraordinary as it is painful to me."

"Permit me," I said, "there is no gainsaying that our Kaiser is theatrical, but to liken him to a maniac on that account is going too far."

"Pray do not misunderstand me, Countess," said the lady from Munich, "I do not judge the Emperor by exterior signs alone: I take the manifestations of his inner life, his relations to his mother, to his officials, and to his people, his government, his attitude toward and his contributions to art, literature, and what not, into consideration as well. And judging him from every conceivable standpoint, I say and repeat: William II reminds me exceedingly of his late cousin Ludwig. To return to the spectacle witnessed from my window: with just such affectation of dignity was the King of Bavaria wont to walk in state processions, or on other public occasions, during the latter half of the seventies, not to speak of the last years of his life, when his





"Her Majesty then concurred in the opinion of the medical authorities: that her sons inherited the insanity of the Hohenzollerns through her?"

"Indeed she did, poor lady! and this knowledge led her to mortify her flesh and penetrate her soul with ceaseless sorrow," replied the Baroness; "but why do you ask? I thought that was a matter quite generally understood."

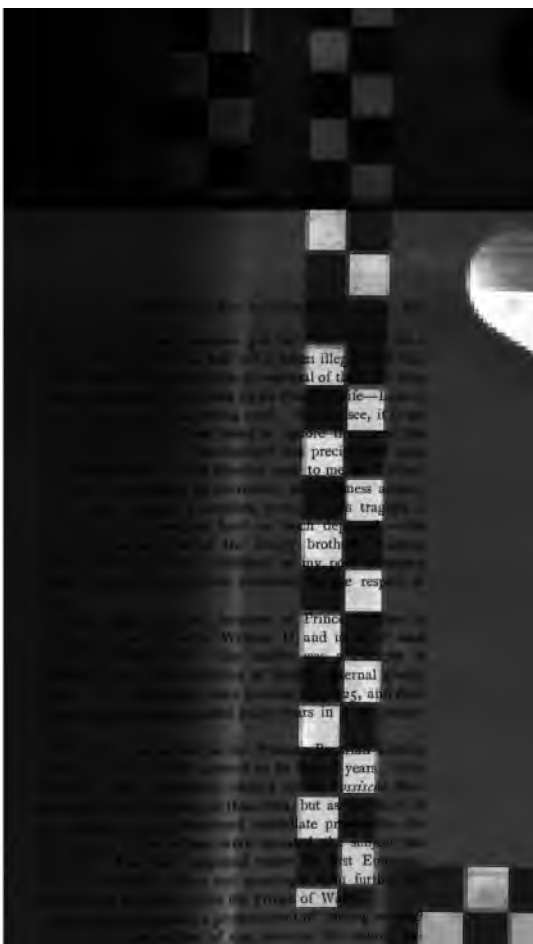
"Because," I replied, "the Kaiser has a habit of ignoring that fact, and, instead, offers an extract from a letter the Duchess of Orleans wrote to Queen Charlotte in 1710, and which reads:

"'Grave suspicions are entertained regarding the children of the Bavarian house: the Elector and his brothers are thought to be the progeny of a crazy Italian doctor, named Simoni. Though it is claimed the doctor went no further than to give the Elector and his wife a strong cordial, promising therewith to increase their family, all the children born after the experiments began are suspiciously like the medical person.'

"'The madness of this traitorous Dago,' argues William, 'has been bobbing up in the Wittelsbachs time and again, and King Otto is the latest victim of the curse.'

"I know, of course, in a general way, that before the advent of Frederick William the Fourth's niece, the Wittelsbachs were a sound-minded race," I said, in conclusion, "but was there really no hereditary taint on the father's side? You who lived for a life-time at the Munich Court are in my eyes a better authority on this question than historians."

"I have known Ludwig the Second's grandfather and father," answered my friend, "and in my younger days met people who remembered Max Joseph quite well. All were eminently sane men, and of Maximilian's seven brothers and sisters, only one, Princess Alexandra, exhibited signs of derangement at a critical period of her





There is every probability that he did, for the medical authorities had already decided that Ludwig might have escaped the curse of insanity for many years to come, had power not been thrust upon him so early in life.

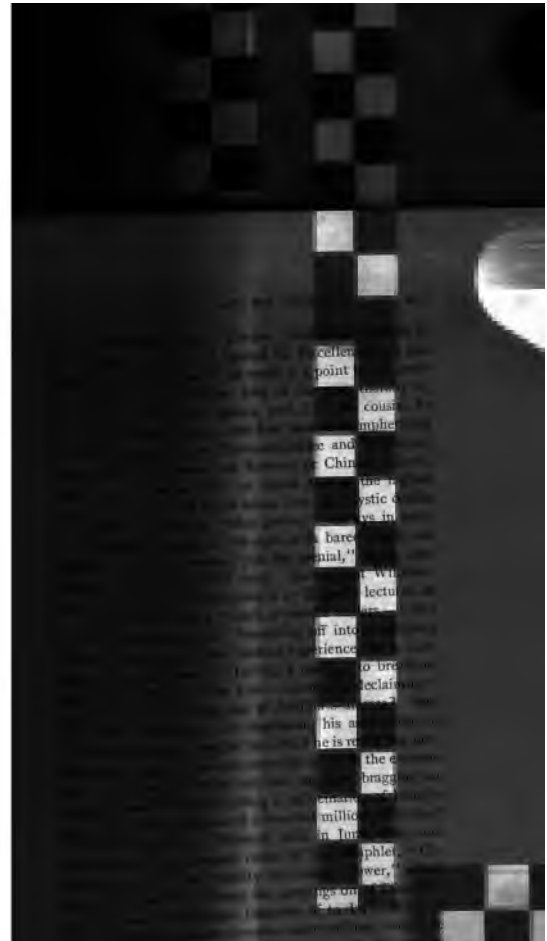
If Kaiser Frederick had lived for twenty or thirty years longer, the catastrophe now threatening William II might have been averted, for persons with their minds hereditarily tainted may, nevertheless, shape their destinies to some extent. By refusing to feed their inordinate appetite for self-aggrandizement, by rigidly declining to give way to the egotistical impulses consuming them, they may retard the progress of the disease, may even lead it into harmless channels. Perhaps William would have learned to curb his inherent proclivities, if his judgment had been allowed to mature. As it was, both grandnephews of Frederick William IV decided upon the opposite course.

Suddenly elevated by his father's untimely death,¹ Ludwig gave himself up to the most extravagant enjoyment of kingly puissance, taking the mediæval notions of the "*roy Soleil*" for a standard and acting in a general way as if his petty kingdom were an empire of the vastness of Charlemagne's realm. And the ink of the pamphleteering literature called forth by his tragic end was not yet dry when William plunged into the same abyss, strutting, head tossed in the air, blustering.

And has he not kept it up ever since with true madman's perseverance, braving the ridicule of the world, throwing sound counsel to the winds, and critics, ever so humble, into gaol?

The manner of the Kaiser's intercourse with his Ministers has already been noticed. "Unprecedented," said the

¹ Maximilian died in his fifty-first, Kaiser Frederick III in his fifty-seventh year.





in Roman history that might pass as counterparts of the dismissal of Bismarck and of the squandering of the old Emperor's fortune by William II; but, though Caligula is dead these eighteen hundred years and despite the fact that the majority of Quidde's analogies were rather far-fetched, the Germans proved so intent upon the promised explanation of their Kaiser's eccentricities that they allowed the publishers to pick up a fortune in an incredibly short space of time,—seventy-five thousand marks for Roman history (brought up to date) within four weeks! Mommsen's and Treischke's books do not yield half so much in a decade. All told, half a million copies of the pamphlet were purchased; in other words, every intelligent citizen of the Fatherland either bought or borrowed it, and all read it! Is it possible to conceive a more telling proof of the nation's distrust of William's sanity? And if the great mass of the people is moved to suspect that his much-fawned-upon *Genialität* is a disease of the nerves, how much more so are we members of the Court holding daily intercourse with His Majesty, we who are intimately acquainted with his own and his family history and gorged with the gossip of all royal establishments of Europe, past and present?

The reading public sees from time to time paragraphs in the papers setting forth the Kaiser's aspirations to emulate Frederick the Great. Though anachronistic, there is nothing discreditable in such an ambition; yet members of the household, who, like myself, see William grimacing for half-hours at a time before a mirror hanging by the side of a life-size portrait of Frederick, cannot help feeling deeply apprehensive that behind all this there is more than vain-gloriousness.

At the breakfast given in honor of Prince Augustus of Saxony, in October, 1895, the Kaiser surprised his guest by an invitation to accompany him to Potsdam, where he





parliament—of the living, puissant Hohenzollern-initiative, always setting the dogs of war loose before his enemies had time to get over their surprise.

"But Frederick is not dead, he lives here" (striking his breast), "and his mailed fist will clutch somebody's throat sooner or later," and so on *ad infinitum*.

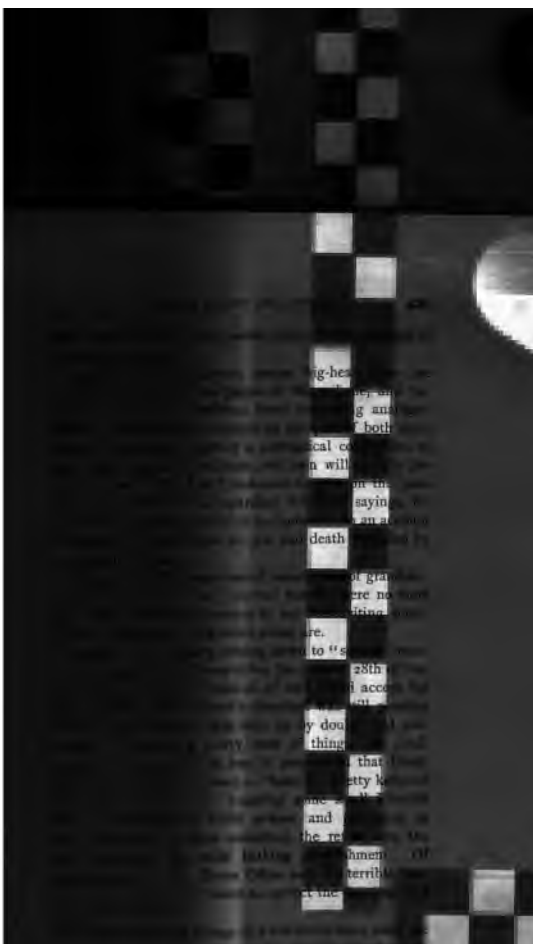
Perhaps it will. But when it does, a *paranoia*¹ verdict, such as that which discrowned Your Majesty's granduncle, in October, 1857, and your cousin, in June, 1886, will assuredly stalk in the wake of that act.

The present chronicler has neither the technical knowledge nor the material at hand to attempt a complete parallel of the cases of Frederick William, Ludwig, and William. That a marked similarity existed between the mental conditions of Queen Louise's son and the Bavarian grandson of William of Prussia is notorious, and that many of Ludwig's idiosyncrasies survive in William II was already shown; but I should be the first person to credit these signs of derangement to the account of mere eccentricity if they were exceptional manifestations instead of links in a chain that seems to drag the Kaiser irresistibly to his doom.

Alas! that there is such a chain, and twice alas that it should be the one that drew Ludwig below the weeds of the mountain lake!

The King of Bavaria's case was diagnosed as exaltation of self-esteem and of craving for grandeur, coupled with limitless egotism and heightened by impulsiveness. He was found to be deficient in judgment, a spendthrift, curious for knowledge and hard-hearted withal; that is, he possessed singularities so prominent in the Kaiser that

¹ Paranoia, confusion of the senses, was the medical term used to characterize the condition of both Frederick William IV and Ludwig II.

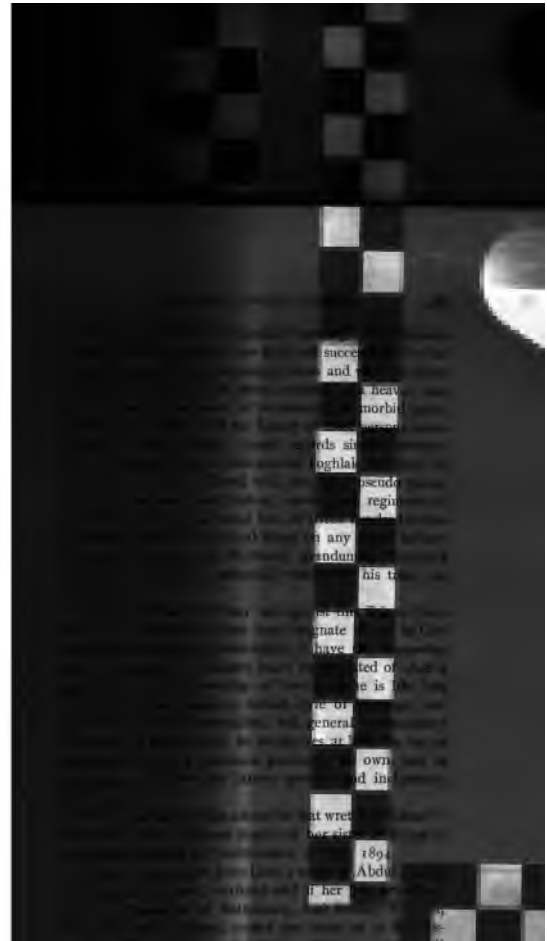




of rapid thought, or else an anomaly born of the passion to play Providence.

The former Minister of Cult, Count Zedlitz, was selected by William for his important office, despite the fact that he had never enjoyed the benefits of a course in college, and that the most extensive sphere of administration his new Postmaster-General, Herr von Podbielski, a retired cavalry officer, ever presided over was a stable full of hussar horses, for which he bought forage and whose manure he sold at advantageous prices; yet the Kaiser thought the one a fit superior of a Virchow, a Mommsen, and Helmholtz, and the other splendidly qualified to succeed the great Doctor Stephan. The why and wherefore he explained a dozen times before all the Court: "because they will receive their instructions from me." Still, Richard Wagner was drummed out of Munich because Ludwig desired to make him his Minister of Finance.

That a General can do everything is one of the Kaiser's pet phrases, yet ever since his accession to the throne he has bounced generals by the hundred, year after year. It happened at a dinner in June, 1897, that he asked one of his adjutants to name the generals dismissed during the last three months. Thirty were counted, whereupon His Majesty said, with a grin: "That is what I call juggling old iron in right royal style," and the senior of the pensioned officers was only fifty-six years of age! During the further course of the meal the Kaiser opined that his grandfather would have gained even more kingdoms, dukedoms, and principalities if he had had for Chancellor a General, instead of a mere civilian (Bismarck). There is more suspicious acceleration of thought for you, the activity of William's mind, quickened by hallucinations. This symptom the Kaiser has in common with the late Ludwig, as he also appears to have inherited





"William says he likes the Grand Seigneur as the embodiment of absolutism, as a ruler prepared to rule at the hazard of seeing one-half of his people dead on the ground, that the other half may learn to obey," spoke Adolph, impressively; "that he has told me a dozen times. 'If Frederick William IV had possessed but a spark of the spirit that lives in the so-called sick man,' he once said, 'I should be monarch in the true sense of the word to-day, though Berlin gutters might have run with blood for weeks in succession during March, '48.'"

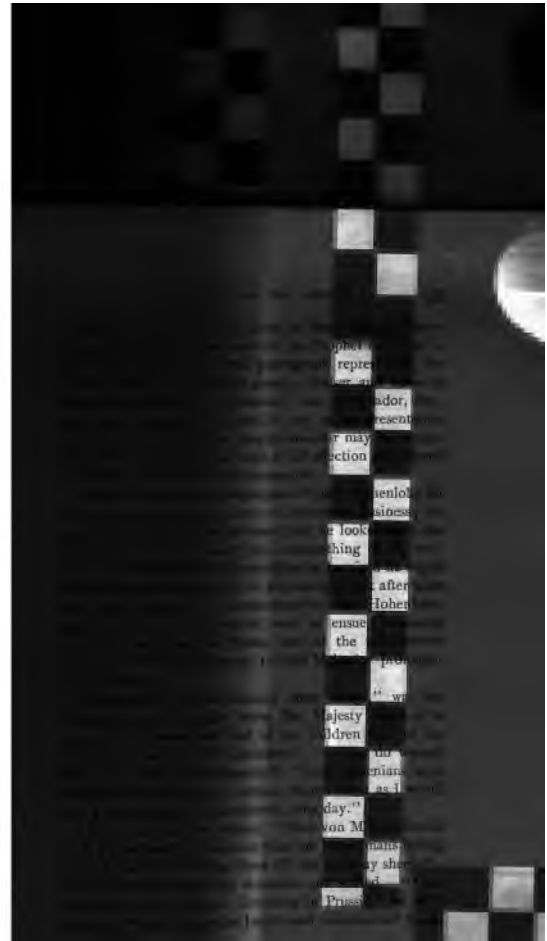
The Duchess of Sparta covered her face with both hands. "Horrible!" she sighed.

"But His Majesty's true convictions," whispered Baroness Reischach—"think of the Frankfurt speech."¹

"Nonsense," resumed the Prince of Hesse, in an effort to efface what his all-too-truthful brother-in-law had said, "our *beau-frère* Willie merely flatters the Padishah to obtain His Sultanship's permission to visit the imperial harem the next time he goes to Constantinople."

I am rather inclined to think that the Kaiser's desire to smoke a *tchibuk* with Abdul-Hamid and a thousand Circassians, with white and black and olive and red women, kadyns and odaliks, is as strong as ever, and that his Turkish policy is in part dictated by this passion; but that Prince Adolph correctly reported His Majesty's sentiments with respect to ideal kingship was demonstrated three years after the family reunion in Empress Frederick's castle, namely, in the summer of 1896, when the Kaiser presented Abdul-Hamid with a chromo for living up to his conception of "rule by the grace of God."

¹ The Kaiser said on August 16, 1888, at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, "he would rather see his forty-two millions of Prussians dead on the battlefield than give up one foot of ground gained by the Franco-German war."





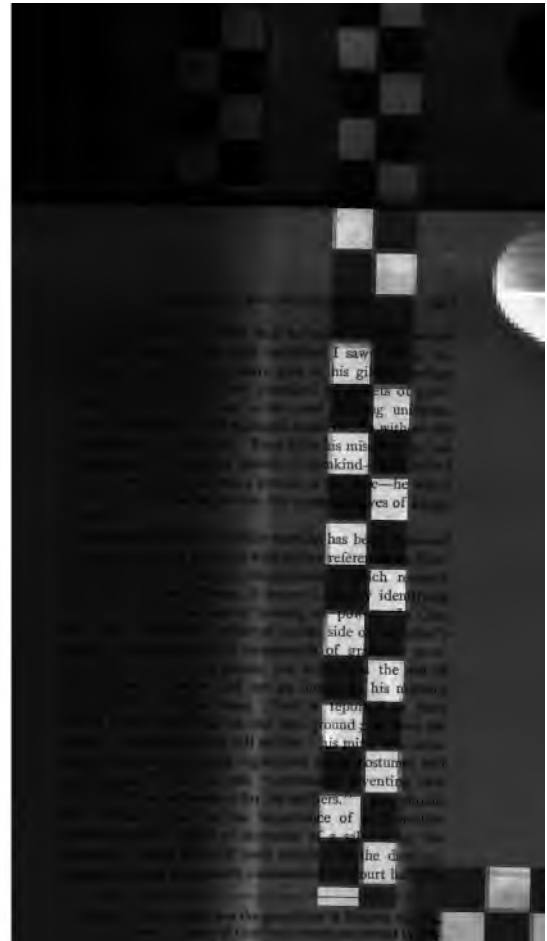
And a year and a half later he sent Prince Heinrich on "the new crusade, to uphold the Cross and punish the slayers of Christians in China." But, then, His Majesty never dined with the Tientze, the Son of Heaven, and that worthy's Viceroy, Li Hung Chang, when he visited Germany in August, 1896, utterly failed to fulfil William's expectations.

While insanity of power usually instils an overweening passion for the military in its victims, Ludwig differed from his cousin, the Kaiser, in the point of bellicose proclivities. During the last ten years of his life, he scarcely ever donned uniform, but, though trotting and marching and countermarching to the tune of drum and fife had no allurements for the disciple of Richard Wagner, he utilized the army as eagerly as William for purposes designed to heighten the lustre of his personal appearances.

My friend tells me that the drive-ways and footpaths of the Munich royal park, *Englischer Garten*, were fairly alive with soldiers, gendarmes, police, and detectives when the King was at home. The public was given to understand that the less seen of it the better, and ladies and gentlemen of the Court, known to the officials, had to submit to petty annoyances in the way of identification, warnings, etc., at such times as well as the common rabble. Ludwig never rode or drove out except *à la Shah*,—cavalry in the front, at both sides, and in the rear.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "your poor King suffered from monomania of suspicion, or exaltation of awe."

This the *Hofdame* denied. "Only during the last twelve months of his life that phase of insanity appeared to trouble him." The Baroness told me of several visits she paid the King in his lonely mountain castles on behalf of her mistress. "Sometimes," she said, "I secured permission to gaze upon the all-highest face for a second or two,

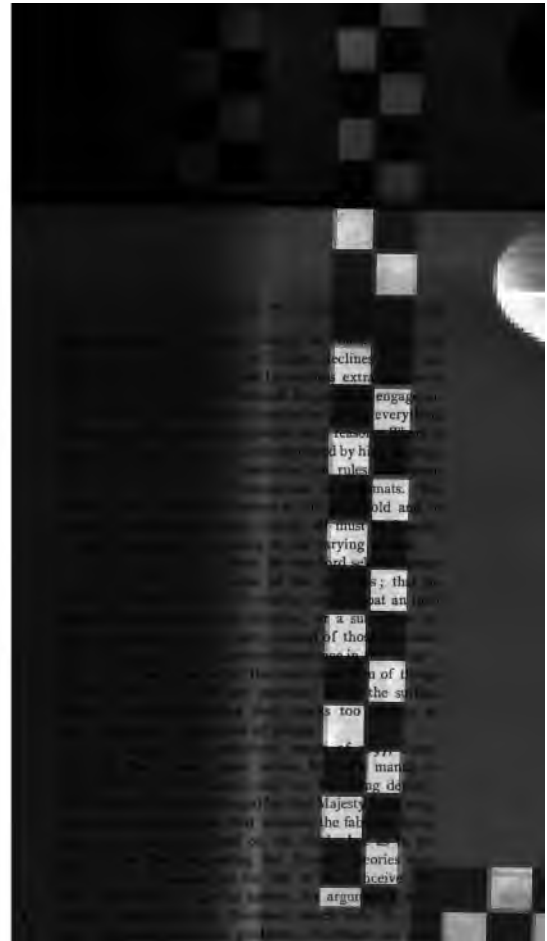




listen to his tirades against setting the buttons of an undress frock in a straight line,—themes we people of the Court hear discussed morning, noon, and night. Moreover, count, if you can, William's regulations and orders about the cut of pantaloons, the facings of pelisses, and the impression tan boots are sure to make on African savages, and you will think better of that pseudo-Romanoff strangled "because his lucid intervals became shorter week after week." Over the taxpayer's feelings, who pays for the Kaiser's pettifoggery, his endless innovations and alleged improvements, that improve only the bank accounts of army purveyors and are often dropped as suddenly as they are introduced,—over the sentiments of this beast of burden, steeped in penury, indifference, and political hysteria, I will draw the veil.

Paul, we are assured, was crazy enough to enforce his clothes regulations even upon civilians, A.D. 1796. And a hundred years later, the Kaiser ordered that all station-masters in Prussia must provide themselves with a specially designed dress-suit, including a toy sword and a plumed hat, to wear when he passes through their town. As the outfit costs from three to four hundred marks, and the majority of the officials receive but three or four times as much per annum, resignation or starvation, or both, became the order of the day.

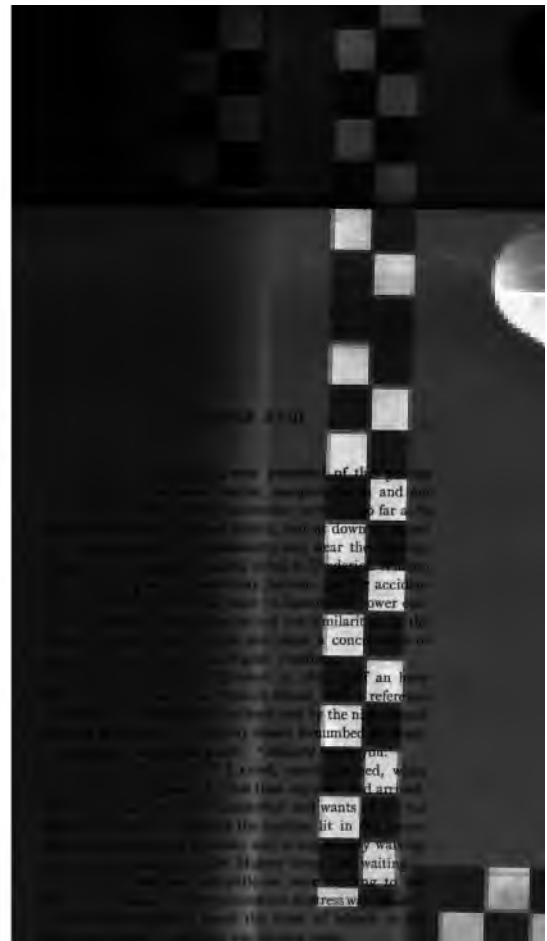
That His Majesty tells the ladies of his household what they shall wear on festive occasions is tyrannical, but not wholly unreasonable, seeing that he imagines he owns his *entourage* body and soul, but other women, even relatives of His Majesty, will not take kindly to his expensive suggestions. Seldom does a ball or state occasion pass that there is not a gap in the line of our royal dames; now the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern sends "her regrets," again Princess Aribert goes to bed twenty-four





two or three battles be fought, such as we experienced in Bavaria this summer: vast masses of foot launched on top of each other, *tambour battant*, horse and artillery swallowing hailstorms of bullets with gusto, as if they were *Erbswurst* soup! Why, unless our Peninsular friends turned grave-diggers one and all, pestilence would drive them back. It is my humble opinion," concluded Count Haeseler, with a sarcastic smile, "that the dead never entered into His Majesty's calculations."

In his book, "The Blot Upon the Brain," William W. Ireland, M.D., Edinburgh, says: "They" (the victims of insanity of power) "are easily beaten in the field by generals who prefer what is essential to what is superfluous."





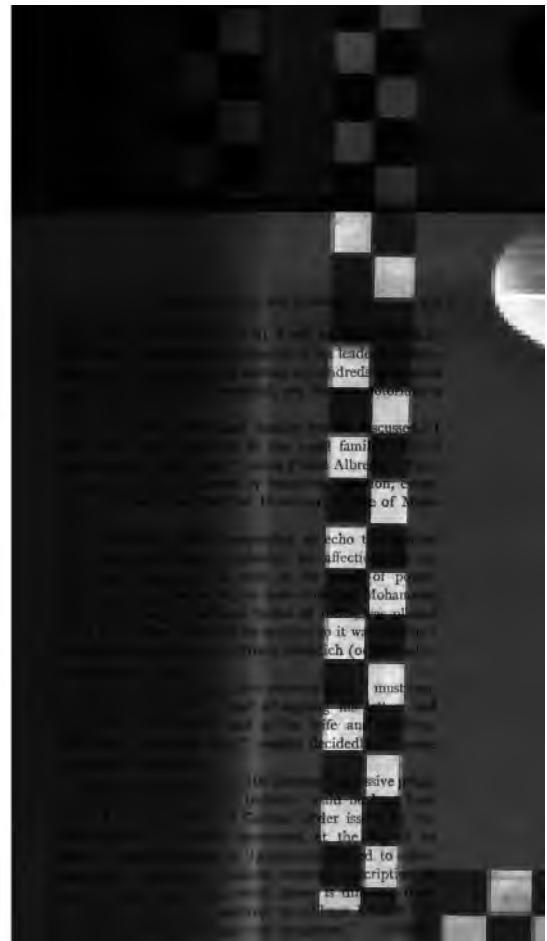
"I hastened down-stairs to accompany Her Majesty back to her apartment. She looked awe-struck, but did not speak a word. Only when I had put her to bed again, and was about to take my leave, she said: 'Marguerite, I do not want you to retire with feelings of misgiving. The King brought no alarming news. He talked of nothing but the weather, and at the moment of departing added: "To-day, I believe, is your sixtieth birthday. Accept my royal felicitations."'"

To compel a sickly old woman to get up in the middle of the night for the pleasure of haranguing her with platitudes,—who but a madman could conceive so preposterous an idea! "Yet look at the date," resumed the Baroness: "October 15, 1885! Only eight months before Ludwig's tortuous career came to a horrible end."

The speaker recalled numerous instances of the King's cruelty to his mother: how he forced her to vacate the palace she liked best; how, by ostentatious display, he caused Queen Marie to doubly feel the loss of power and influence; how, by his parade of hatred and contempt for her relatives, he wounded her sentiments and lessened her popularity in the land,—three examples out of a hundred, that remind one strangely of the Kaiser's treatment of the Empress Frederick.

That William dispossessed his mother from the home where she had spent the happiest years of her life,¹ that he gruffly denied her the poor pleasure of assuming representative social duties during Auguste Victoria's frequent

¹ Immediately after Emperor Frederick III died, William assumed possession of Castle Friedrichskron, where his parents had lived for over thirty years, and to efface every sign of his father's residence there he dropped the name and reinstated that designated by the builder, Frederick II; namely, Neues Palais.





notice of the above fact and to be careful to execute the prescribed evolutions when meeting the imperial party, under penalty," etc. To-morrow the Kaiser narrates at supper how he whisked Count Gessler off Bornstädter Feld and ordered him to keep to his room for three days, "because his spurs were not of the approved pattern."

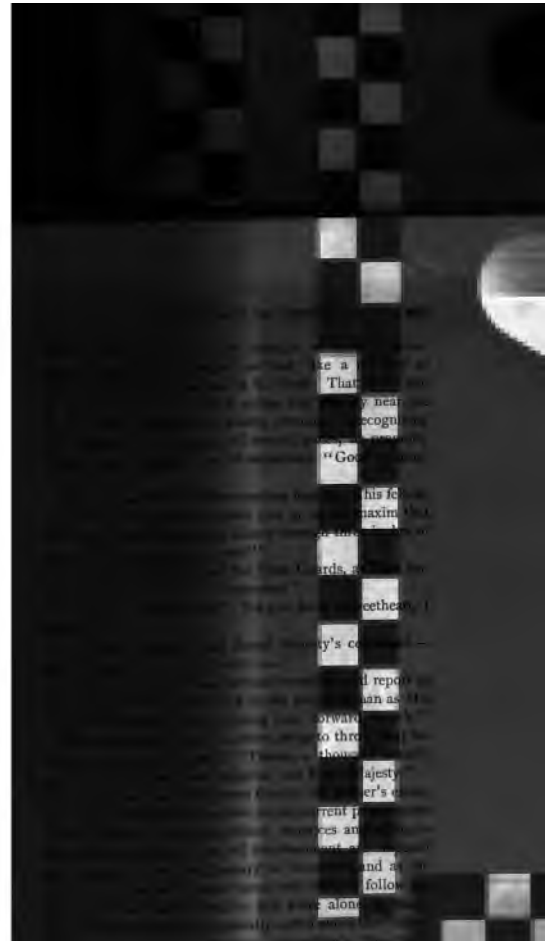
"*Graf Gessler?*" queried the Kaiserin,—"*Gessler of the Cuirassiers and of my Body-guard?*"

"The same. And why did I do it? I might not have been so hard on him, had he not passed me the other day without saluting when I was in my dog-cart."

"Surely, he did not recognize our new livery."

"He ought to recognize his Emperor through a three-inch board! And, by the way," added His Majesty, "I learned the name of that captain of Dragoons who failed to *make front* before us near Babelsberg Sunday morning; it was Freiherr von —, garrisoned at —, and commanded to Berlin to serve on the General Staff. I found that out by sending a description of the delinquent to the colonels of all our dragoon regiments. He is on his way home. Berlin is no place for a donkey of his calibre."

In the winter of 1895, Lieutenant-Colonel von Natzmer came near losing his head as commander of the Third Guard Lancers on account of the stupidity of a trooper who, being sent on *galopin* duty in the course of some exercises, mistook the Emperor for a captain of infantry, named Kahn, William wearing no shoulder-knots or other insignia on that occasion. Only by offering to distribute photographs of His Majesty in a variety of uniforms among his men did Natzmer save his bacon. The case of under-officer Mohr, of the First Foot Guards, and how he became a sergeant, is also interesting. Mohr was never suspected of "carrying a field-marshal's staff in his knapsack," but





era, lacking a few paltry centuries—were wiped out of the lives of some eight to nine thousand of his subjects since William assumed the crown, the list of culprits embracing both sexes and all classes of society. And for what?

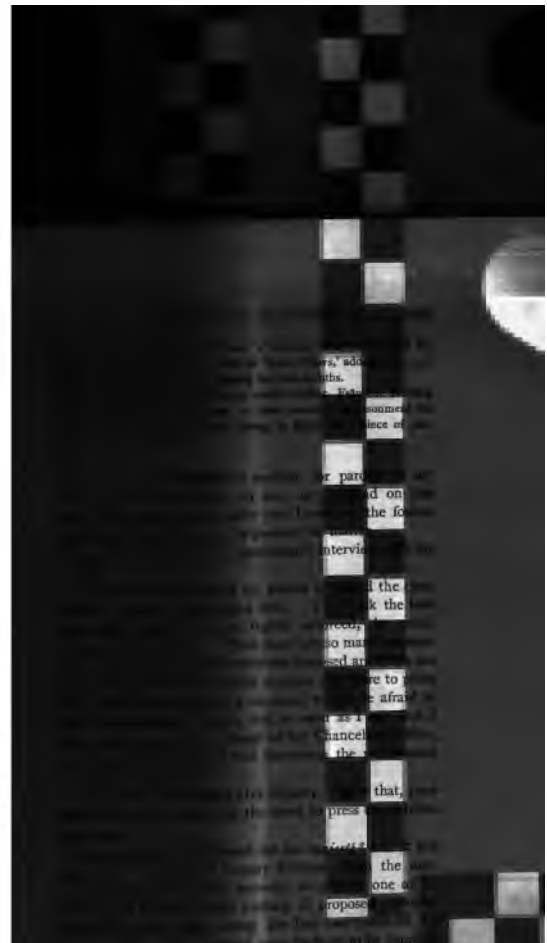
In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (I quote from public records) for the heinous crime of impeaching the Kaiser's aptitude as a composer, as a ruler, poet, diplomat, or ship-builder; as a conqueror, orchestra-leader, or expounder of the Monroe doctrine; as a sportsman, as God's anointed, as a painter, strategist, novel-writer, circus-director, or lawgiver; as advocate of duellos, as a constitutional king, stage-manager, or absolute monarch; as playwright, huntsman, infantryman, cavalryman, family-man, or maid-of-all-work. The prosecutor's license is practically limitless; but there are still some knots in his rope that admit of lengthening the line. To let no guilty one escape, it is stipulated, for instance, that insult to Majesty superannuates only after five years. Thus a discharged servant, a faithless friend, or malicious employer may prosecute you in January, 1898, for a remark you dropped (or did not drop) in December, 1893, or, if he prefers, he may blackmail you for that length of time under threat of informing the state's attorney. And that frequently happens in the Fatherland.

As to the personalities of the culprits, I will quote from one of the daily bulletins:

"The wife of a feudal land-owner in Pomerania was 'sent up' for nine months because she remarked that the Emperor might kiss her foot.

"A registered prostitute in Altona got four months' imprisonment for a similar offence, though her invitation was of a more comprehensive character.

"Eugen Richter's sally, made in the Reichstag some time ago: 'Yesterday the German Emperor and fifty of the noblest of the nation

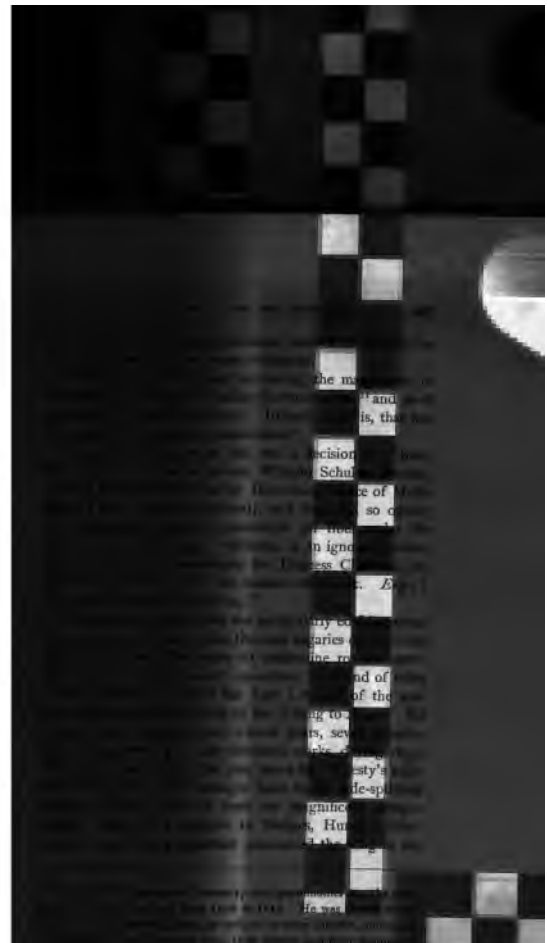




library, snorting and neighing like a horse; when he ordered that his Minister of Finance should lose both eyes for refusing to advance him twenty millions to finish his fairy castle of Neuschwanstein, or when he decided that an adjutant, who had failed to secure a lover for him, was to vanish in the 'black hole' below the foundations of Linderhof, the King was undoubtedly mad, and only a madman could have expected to see such commands executed in 1885 or 1886! During the earlier stages of his illness, even acute monomania of pride and vanity could not induce him to ask severer punishment for victims of the existing laws."

Meanwhile, the increased punishments have come to pass without resort to legislation. Acting upon His Majesty's suggestion, the courts are of late condemning men and women for criticisms of governmental acts *in which the Kaiser takes a special interest*, for protesting against the Sedan celebration on the score of peace propaganda, for instance, and the lists of offenders comprise, besides members of the aristocracy and prostitutes, little boys and girls who, on account of tender age, are otherwise exempt from criminal prosecution.

"It is William's sense of divine appointment that makes him look so sharply after criminals of this sort," is my mistress's stereotyped apology when members of the family bring up the matter. Poor lady! she is not always happy in the selection of her similes. The above one, for instance, she used once too often; namely, on the occasion of a gathering of relatives at the Neues Palais, in October, 1897, when the Court was laughing over an act of imperial clemency in the case of a sixteen-year-old nurse-girl from Coblenz, who had been condemned to nine months' imprisonment for saying she would like to sleep with the Emperor.





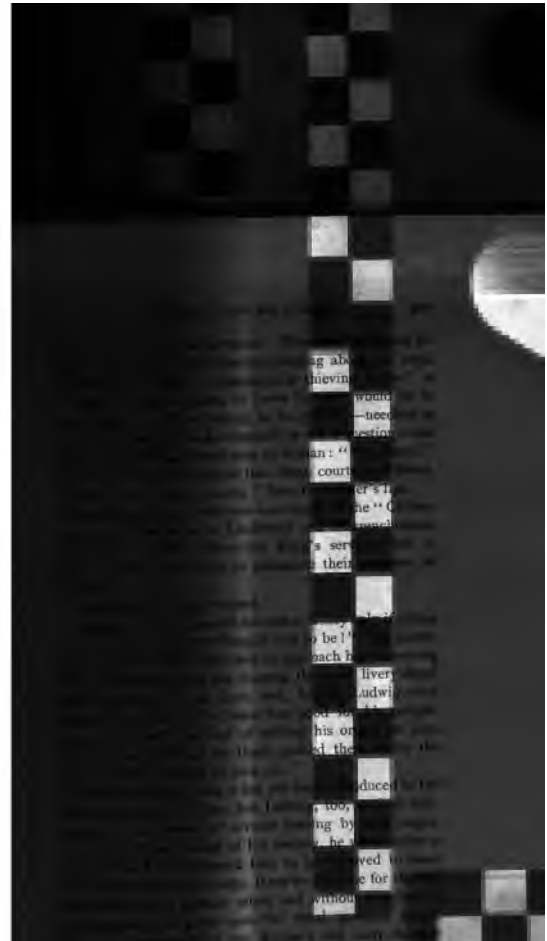
sea-god, who in reality was a miserable landlubber. "The Austrians and Hungarians laughed to kill themselves," reported one of the participants, "but we knew better. If any of our crew had dared to smile assent, he would have been given occasion for kicking himself sooner or later."

In connection with *Use majesté*, it should not go unnoticed, however, that there are one hundred and forty-eight English square miles in Germany where man, woman, and child may say of the Kaiser what they please, this sanctuary being known as Reuss, short for Elder Branch, while the Almanach de Gotha designates it as Reuss-Greiz-Schleiz-Lobenstein-Eberswalde, with several villages yet to be heard from. The potentate of this district is Heinrich XXII, a cousin of the Heinrich who, during his wedding-night, was overheard to apostrophize his wife *à la main gauche*, the circus-rider Loisset: "Oh, Chlo-tilde my only!" whereupon the former queen of the arena responded with delicious pathos: "Oh, Heinrich my twentieth!"

As old Kaiser Wilhelm allowed this story to be published throughout Prussia, the Reuss *tyrannos* at once determined that hereafter no form or manner of black-guardism directed against the Hohenzollerns should be liable to prosecution in his territory, and to this resolve His Grace has nobly stuck all these years (since 1879).

Newspapers seized for insult to Majesty in all the rest of the twenty-five states and Free Cities, constituting the common Fatherland, are freely circulated in Reuss, *digne aîné*; its 53,787 inhabitants, and visiting strangers too, may shout all they like about William's idiosyncrasies, and *Serenissimi*' dog-tax records abound in such invectives as "Wilhelm" and "Preuss."

A feature of William's character that recalls some of the darkest days of his late cousin's declining years is the





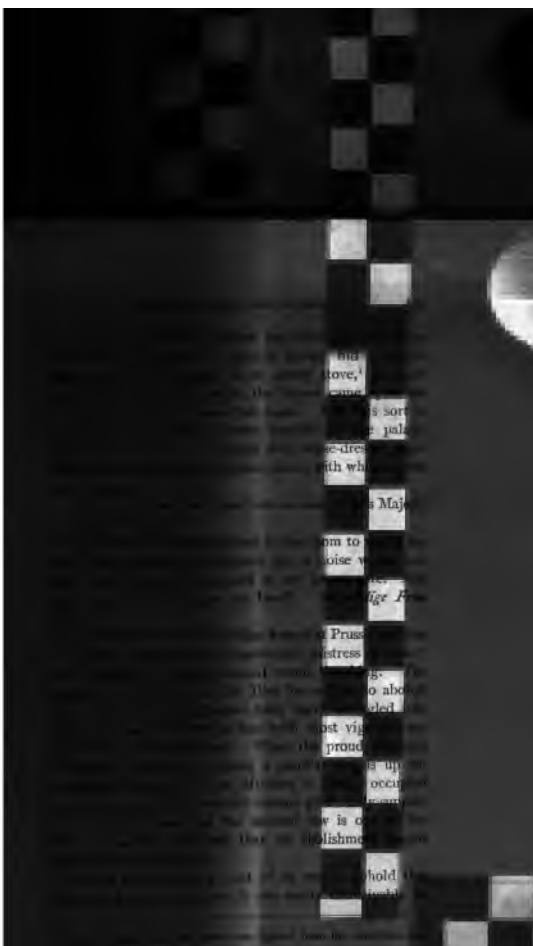
His Majesty's coat-tail in the carriage-door,—and to Rau's successor, who, on a particularly warm winter day, asked whether His Majesty required a lap-robe, instead of placing it in the coach without troubling the master, and to *Haushofmeister* (Major-domo) von Jurns, because the royal yacht *Alexandra* could not be got ready so quickly as the Kaiser demanded.

Like all victims of morbid impulsiveness, a symptom going hand in hand with megalomania, the Kaiser thinks himself above the restrictions of space and time. If he wants a thing, he imagines he has but to say so in order to procure it, whether it be a shirt-stud dropped under the table, or a historical painting for which a dozen square yards of canvas have just been nailed up.

And this condition of the imperial mind tends to more people's ruin than all the rest of His Majesty's crazy notions, save, perhaps, the one compelling persons to make themselves invisible on demand.

The palace regulations stipulate that no servant shall be found in the Emperor's apartments during His Majesty's presence in the castle, sleeping hours excepted. Now it happens sometimes that His Majesty rises at the fifth hour, instead of the seventh or eighth, as announced. What are servants, suddenly confronted by the news of the master's approach while engaged in cleaning, to do? To drop work means dismissal, and to be seen by His Majesty carries the same penalty with it; so they run, simply run, trusting to good luck that the evidence of disorder in the rooms may not be noticed.

My maid, who was formerly attached to the royal chambers, says it is a curious spectacle to see the wood-carriers, firemen, scrubbers, dusters, window-cleaners, and polishers tumble over each other in a wild scramble to elude the master's eye. There must be no noise, no spilling





outsiders. Surely, the times are past when it was thought consistent with the dignity of the King of Prussia to have salt-laden pistols at his elbow in order "to hurry up" sluggish pages. Frederick William I followed that custom, and in one and the same year lamed one man for life and blew another's eyes out. That happened one hundred and fifty or more years ago. Ancient history, is it not? But history repeats itself. The great Frederick and his puny successor, when punishing servants, never went further than to disfigure their faces by blows with walking-sticks, or the butt end of a sword, yet Karl of Prussia, granduncle of the present Kaiser, revived Frederick William's practices and occasionally killed a menial or two,—a fact which led one of his brothers to remark that, if not a Prince, Karl would surely die by the halter. All of which shows that the Hohenzollerns are dangerous masters; that cruelty runs in the family, so to speak;—as a matter of fact, terror stalks ahead of William, his people flee, and hide in fireplaces and niches to escape his eye: they do not care to expose themselves to violence; and what guarantee is there against a caning, or worse, when the sight of a servant walking up a staircase or through a corridor suffices to throw the master into a violent passion?

"*Die verdammten Hausdiener*" (those accursed flunkies) "lounge everywhere about the palace; Eulenburg, you must keep them in the kitchen, or cellar, where they belong," is His Majesty's every-day complaint to his grand-master, when at home.

"May it please Your Majesty, no man or woman enters the residential parts of the palace unless on special duty."

"Details, my dear Eulenburg, do not concern me, and I will not have them thrown up to me. I tell you, and repeat, that the sight of the lackey is distasteful to me, and it is your business to rid my environment of eye-sores."





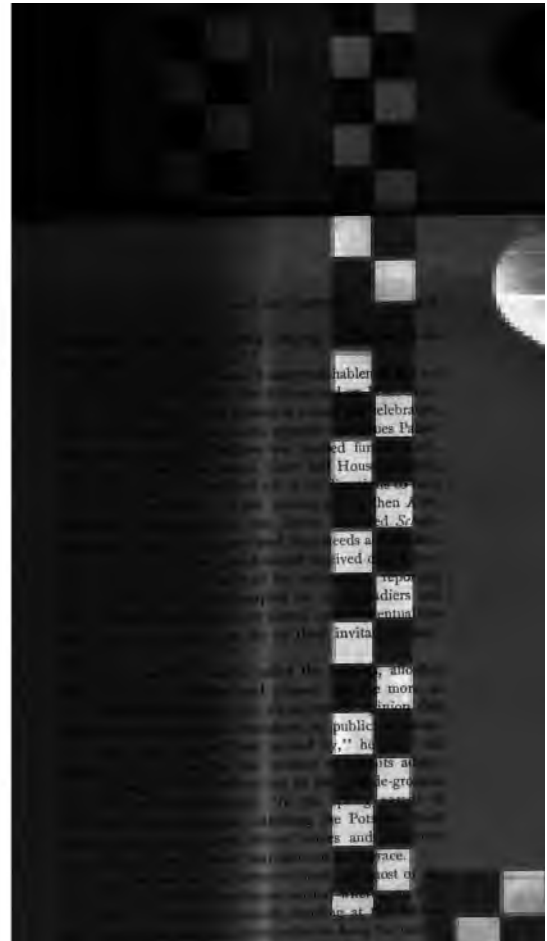
smoker, His Majesty put the stump of an *echte*" (real) "Havana cigar into an ash-tray in his small toilet-room; to-day" (Wednesday), "when he desired to finish it, it was gone, and all inquiries among the attendants, *Kammerdiener*, wardrobemen, lackeys, and chasseurs, proved unsatisfactory. His Majesty therefore concluded that one of the footmen stole the stump, and an investigation is under way."

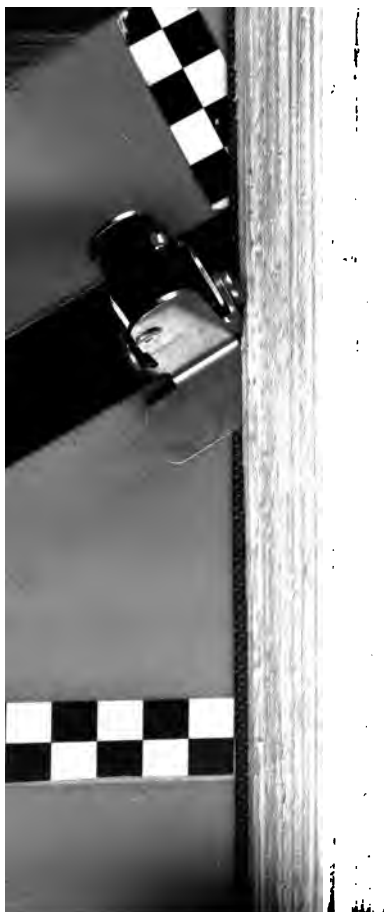
It lasted three days. Then the *corpus delicti* was found—ruined beyond hope of retrieval—at the bottom of a refuse-barrel. After seeing it on the dresser for two mornings in succession, one of the chambermaids had thrown it away.

"The *Stummel* looked so shrunk up," said the reckless hussy, "I thought His Majesty did not want it any more, and, fearing a reprimand for allowing dust-catching things to lie around, I put it into my pail and cleaned the ash-tray."

The Kaiser likes popular applause, huzzahs, and *hochs*, but the hurrahers must keep at a distance. Unlike his royal granduncle and his cousin of Bavaria, he is not a misanthropist, not yet, but his contempt for everybody beyond the pale of his own set—"das verdamnte Publikum" he calls them—increases more and more, particularly as to women.

One year after another Her Majesty and Count Eulenburg experience greater difficulty in persuading the Kaiser to permit the customary royal procession at the Opera House ball, held during carnival, and even if he consents to "mix" with the "damned public" on that one occasion, he usually backs out at the last moment. In 1895 and 1896, William chose to emphasize this contemptuous treatment of his Berliners by persistently keeping to the rear of the royal box, so that very few of the thousands ready to smile upon him got a chance to do so. Does not

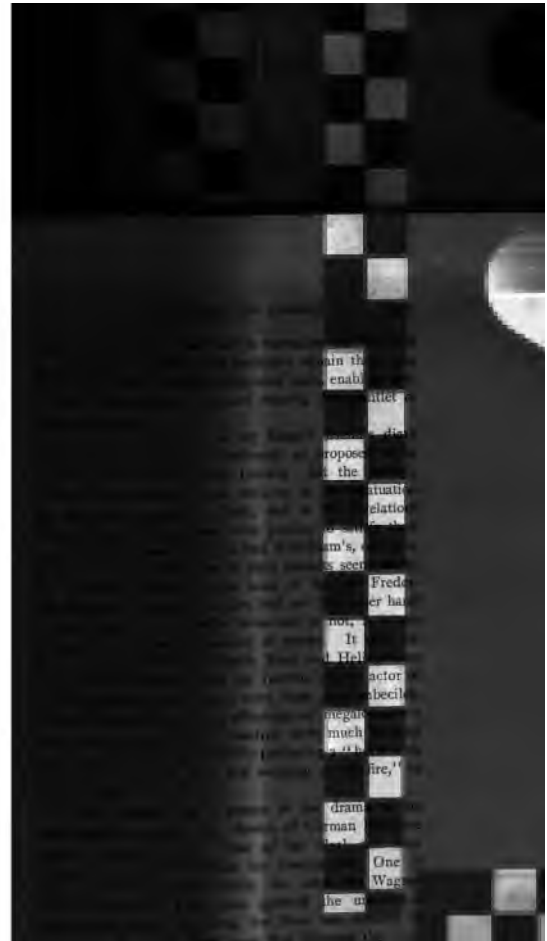




Royal servants then took charge of the women and conducted them into a vault-like subway, at the further end of which was a small door leading to the terrace over dirty steps.

In this dark, damp, and ill-smelling cellar the ladies were locked up until two minutes to eleven, when they were set free to select places for themselves. I was standing behind Her Majesty and little Princess Louise at one of the lower windows of the Palace, in full view of the extraordinary spectacle that now ensued. Their Excellencies and Ladyships came panting up the steps, pushing and jostling, pawing and clawing each other, to gain precedence or room. Here a dowager countess raised her skirts above the knees to climb over a row of chairs, there the young wife of a commanding general tiptoed along the stone rampart, her train over one arm and exposing an incredible expanse of hosiery. *Freifrau* von L——'s lace petticoat was torn into tatters in her efforts to win an advantageous place,—there was no such reckless display of limbs and linen since Borel unbalanced his ladies for "*La Bascule*." The First Guards, standing opposite, shouted with laughter. Her Majesty was furious. Turning to her brother, she said: "After this you will agree with me, I hope, that the Kaiser's dislike for woman's attendance at military spectacles is well founded. I blush for our soldiers, compelled to witness such a sight." Poor lads! they deserved pity, for the Emperor, enraged at the "*damned public's*" behavior, continued the drill half an hour longer than usual.

But the Kaiser's *animose* notions find expression also in measures of political significance. So he changed the district of Rominton, where he has a hunting-box, into an Eveless Eden by buying out all the farmers who were either married or employed female help, and the once

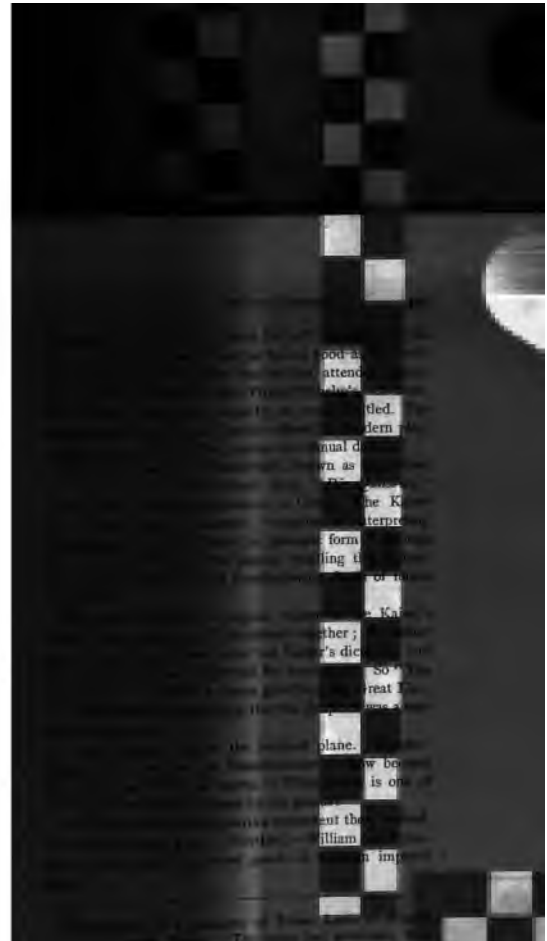




the abnormal only when his enthusiasm for Richard Wagner degenerated into a cult and when his admiration for the romantic Kainz addressed itself to the person, instead of the artist. As Ludwig's brain became more clouded,—that is, as his insane big-headedness increased and his perverted tastes pushed to the front more brazenly,—the former patron of "Egmont," the "Maid of Orleans," and "Marion De Lorme" threw classics to the dogs. He would have only such plays on the royal boards that depicted his own dreams of greatness, that showed him (or the historic types he thought he impersonated) as the embodiment of earthly power, in the rôle of conqueror, lawgiver, or wrathful divinity, as arbiter of the world and in similar parts. And to obtain the dramatic products wanted, he hired men to join together comedies and tragedies from anecdotes, court scenes, and incidents which he himself furnished ready rabbeted and pared down, as are the walls and roofs and chimneys and window-casings of those Norwegian wooden houses, sent parcelwise all over Europe.

The Kaiser's taste in matters theatrical has moved along similar lines of idealism, followed by self-glorification. To begin with: Goethe, Schiller, Hebbel, Grillparzer, then Wildenbruch, Lauff, Büttner.

During the first four or five years of his reign, His Majesty tried to trundle the Thespian chariot alongside his political and diplomatic tally-ho coaches. His Intendant of the Royal Play and Opera Houses, Bolko Count Hochberg, the same who once came near being brother-in-law to Herbert Bismarck, was a good enough Major of the Reserves, but as to competing with Oscar Blumenthal, Ludwig Barnay, and the late Pollini,—that was entirely out of the question. "I will let him run the financial end, and look after the artistic department myself," said His

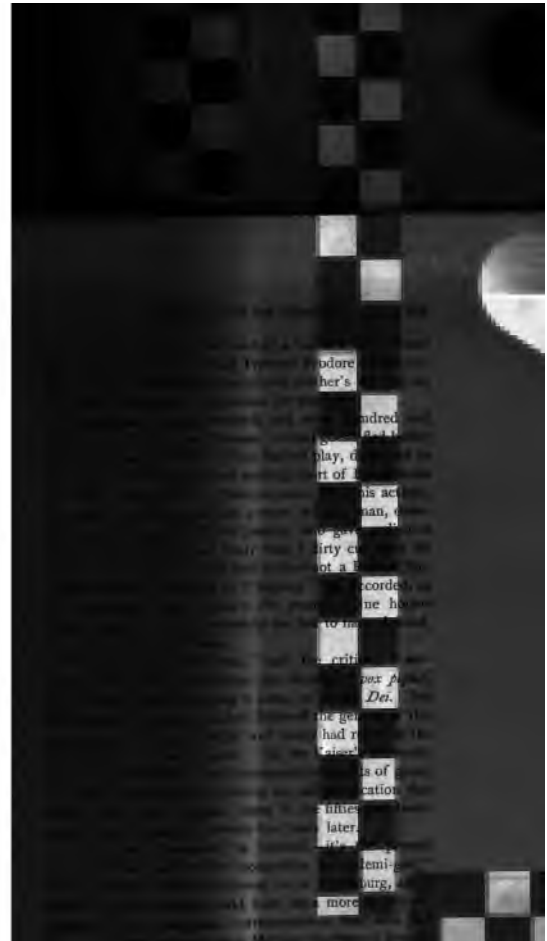




In the annals of our Court, the winter of 1896-1897 lives as the dreadful period of the Emperor's pregnancy with "*Willehalm*," "*Willehalm*" being a festival play, conceived and written by the literary *Zweibund* in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of William I (March 22). There was not a member of the upper household who did not know large portions of it by heart long before its production, so incessantly were the words drummed into our ears. "*Mein Herr Grossvater*," "*Wilhelm der Grosse*," were the sole topics of conversation by Kaiser and Kaiserin, and His Majesty persisted in giving whole pages of monologue and bits of the dialogue at all times, either to point out passages written by himself, or to illustrate the beauty of Wildenbruch's versification improved by him.

The last ten days preceding the festival William divided between attending rehearsals and instructing the chief performers privately at Count Hochberg's Berlin residence. In consequence, my mistress saw little of her husband, save at bed-time, when, she told Countess Brockdorff, he was still full of the grand drama and the trouble he had had with the actors and actresses to make them understand their parts.

There was Fräulein Lindner, for instance, cast to play the "Soul." She had actually smiled at a certain passage of her monologue. "That made the Kaiser wild," declared Her Majesty. "'Fräulein Lindner,' he cried, 'by an expression like that, you are liable to spoil my whole play. The German soul, I want you to understand, is grave, stern, tragic almost. Try to picture it as it is written on my own face. Then you cannot help being successful. And as to your costume, it must resemble a train of thought,—it must be an uninterrupted, flowing line. There must be neither girdle nor corsets.'"





from Quiddle's "Caligula" in support of the theory that Caesarean madness sat upon the throne of Frederick the Great. Here are some of their deadly parallels:

"Caligula used to call his senators up from bed that they might see him dance. 'Loloki' keeps us all night at the Opera House to hear him declaim about his grandfather's impossible virtues and about the superlative statesmanship of Bismarck's employer, charging us a fat entrance fee in addition."

"Caligula was so crazy on the subject of the theatre that occasionally he took part in the performances himself. 'Loloki' has not yet appeared on any stage, save informally in the concert-room, as band-master, but he turns good actors into spiritless automatons by his drill and interference, and he writes plays, which is worse."

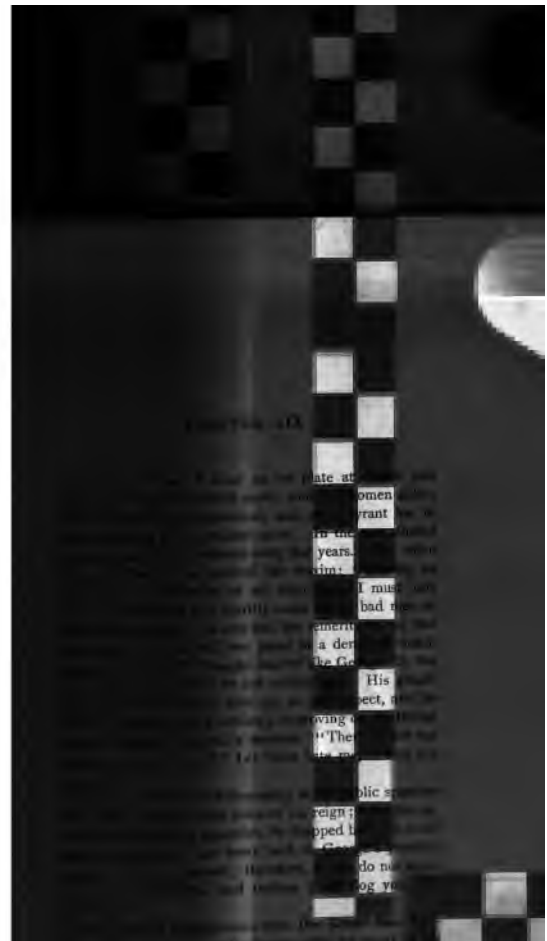
"Caligula owned a thousand different showy dresses, and changed his garments half a dozen times a day. 'Loloki' prides himself upon his arsenals full of different uniforms, and wears out a dozen valets per day dressing and undressing him."

"Caligula was inordinately fond of variety performers, especially indecent ones. Whether he ever commanded army officers and Princes to appear before him in parts such as 'Loloki' ordered the Hereditary Prince of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha and officers of the Guard Fusileers to assume at the smoking concert in the Fusileers' mess during the winter of 1896 is doubtful. Suetonius" (the biographer of the first twelve Caesars) "gives no news on that point, but then there were probably no Sisters Barrison in the first half of the first century, so that Caligula missed the trick of seeing a royal Prince disrobe and ride a horse woman-fashion."

"The Roman Emperor appointed old soldiers to the most important civil offices. Was Podbielski ever anything







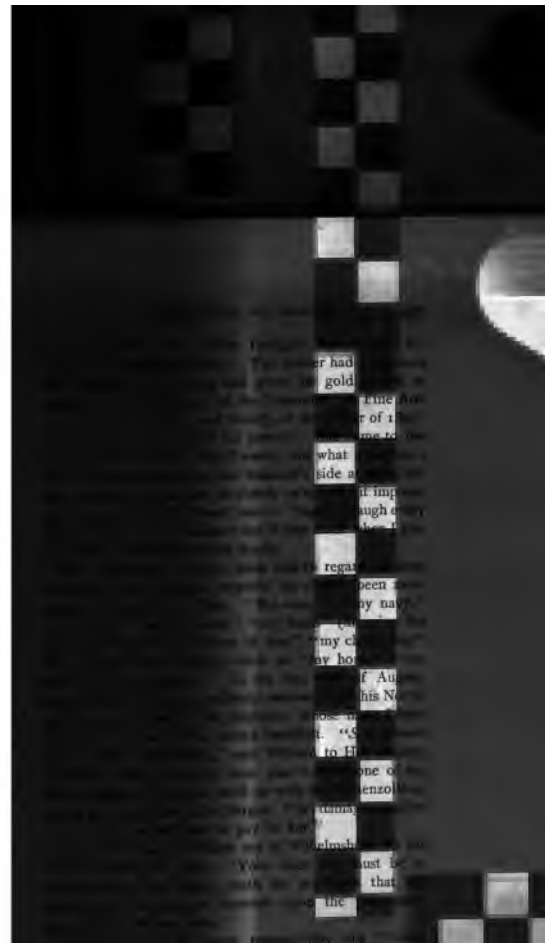


countless acts of assumption, injustice, incivility, and brow-beating. He cannot help them. Taking interest in no one but his ego, and viewing society (so far as it does not directly contribute to his momentary comfort) as something not to be reckoned with, he seems to be unconscious of the existence of any one besides himself.

When he goes riding with his wife, and some accident to her mount or harness delays Her Majesty on the road, William proceeds to his destination in the most unconcerned fashion, taking his gentlemen, gendarmes, and grooms with him; neither does he lessen his pace to give Her Majesty a chance to catch up with the party. "Dona" has her own gentlemen and ladies. Let them look after her.

Maybe the Kaiser admires a woman he meets in society, or the wife of a newly-appointed official. He will say so without reserve, extravagantly praising her good points, if she has delicate hands or fine bosoms. That the Empress, upon whose good graces a woman's position at Court largely depends, will turn against the favored one, strike her name from the visitors' list, and give her the cold shoulder, if ever afterward they meet, does not concern him in the least. He seems to think that honor grows again, like hair.

There was *Fräulein* von Böcklin, for instance, who came up to the Kaiser's standard of beauty as the central figure of some *tableaux vivants*, arranged for the benefit of the Paul Gerhard *Stift*, in January, 1891. How he raved about her hands and feet, her arms and shoulders. Photographs of the young lady adorned his study, private bedroom, and the audience-chamber, but *mademoiselle* herself never crossed the threshold of the Schloss or Palais, though Count Eulenburg proposed her for years successively at every festive occasion. Auguste Victoria simply put her foot down, and *Fräulein* von Böcklin's social success was





the inner circle, could guess the chief cause of his retention in office? "The Prince Regent of Bayern and the Kings of Württemberg and Sachsen assume the right to be heard before I select my new Chancellor,—*es ist zu toll*" (it's downright madness). "Next, His Grace of Pymont will undertake to run my government." This is His Majesty's own explanation, which, of course, does not efface the better and more likely one set forth in a previous chapter.

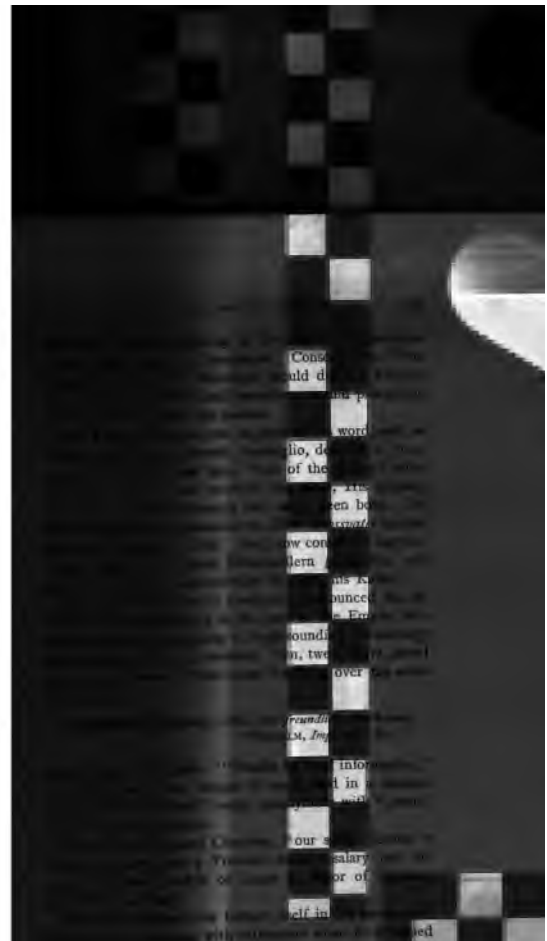
In conformity with his ideas of omnipotence, the Kaiser made his brother-in-law (Adolph) regent for the demented Prince of Lippe, though the King of Sachsen warned him during a visit paid to Berlin *incognito* that the appointment could not stand, the Count of Biesterfeld being the next agnate.

"I told Albert," said the Kaiser to Auguste Victoria afterward, "that Adolph went to Bückeburg upon my orders, that he stays there with my will and consent, and for the rest—I gave him his crown; woe to him who touches it."

This last sentence the Empress read to Countess Brockdorff from her diary; she had put it down as something particularly fine and original, and was much astonished to learn of its historic origin with the old Lombard kings.

"At any rate," she said, recovering from her surprise, "Victoria and Adolph have now something to live on" (the civil list of the principality amounts to nearly a quarter of a million of marks), "and the Kaiser will not be bothered with their finances in the future."

There is still another reason for His Majesty's interference on behalf of Adolph. Prince Frederick of Meiningen, brother-in-law of William's sister Charlotte, married against the Kaiser's wishes, selecting for *beau père* this same Count of Biesterfeld, and persuading the Diet of



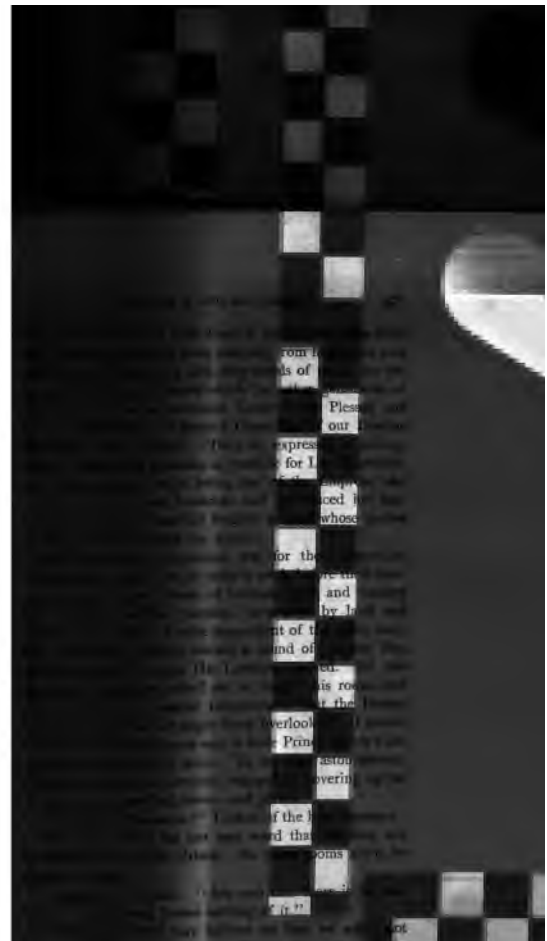


check for ten thousand francs to the Relief Committee. "All the world will talk about it,—can man do more for a national enemy?" spoke his eyes.

In the evening, even before the newspapers had the story, a despatch arrived from Count Philli: "They will haul Your Imperial and Royal Majesty to Paris in a thousand triumphal cars in 1900!" But when, a month afterward, Würtemberg was devastated by floods, the Emperor had neither money nor words of sympathy for the stricken ones. And for the military aid, furnished to the inundated Silesians in the fall of 1897, the towns and villages were promptly taxed: so many pioneer troops, so many marks for food, forage, extra pay, and railway fares. The communes protested: "Extra pay is out of the question. What is the use of having soldiers, if they do not come to the citizens' succor freely and without claims for remuneration."

"Don't dispute," wrote back the Minister of War; "the men did extra work, they deserve extra pay." But if five hundred men are ordered to improve His Majesty's hunting-grounds, as they did at Rominton last year, that is called military "exercise," and compensation is out of the question.

In August, 1895, the Court moved to Berlin, and it was given out simultaneously that His Majesty's friend, an English gentleman of the highest connections, would spend some time with us; namely, the Earl of Lonsdale, or Lord Lonsdale as he is usually called, the same with whom the Emperor stayed at Lowther Castle the previous summer. Ah, the stories of English munificence revived by this piece of intelligence! Our Master of the Horse, *Graf* Wedel, estimated that the pleasure of entertaining the Kaiser damaged His Lordship's bank account to the tune of a million marks, or more, and Count Eulenburg, who was not very enthusiastic about that English visit,—while





are going to miss. It will be a loss of a thousand marks to us footmen alone."

Her Majesty did not know what to say to my information. However, the reception accorded to Lord Lonsdale by the Kaiser and Kaiserin was pleasant enough.

At the Sedan parade, a few days later, we women of the Court looked in vain for Lord Lonsdale. He was to be in the Emperor's suite, but in the long line of glittering uniforms no foreigner was discernible. Finally, one of our Anglomaniacs discovered His Lordship in the second or third row, halting at some distance behind the Emperor, the King of Württemberg, and a host of small-fry Princes.

At the state dinner, held in the White Hall at 5.30 in the afternoon, the same distinction of rank was ostentatiously upheld; His Lordship had to sit down with a lot of cheap goldsticks and councillors, and when he came to look over his invitation for the grand tattoo in the *Lustgarten*, he found it entitled him to standing room on the Schloss terrace. There the proud Englishman stood with some of his friends from the banquet and a lot of officers' wives and daughters, listening to the music. I never would have believed it, had I not seen him myself. If he had raised his eyes, he could have seen their Majesties of Germany, of Württemberg, and of Saxony on the balcony above, holding tea-cups in their hands. We were having supper in the state apartments.

I beckoned the House-marshal, Baron von Lyncker, to my side. "Was His Lordship not invited?"

"No."

"But he is our guest."

"Y-e-s," drawled the Baron; "still, here we have several Kings and no end of Royal Highnesses to look after."

"Surely, the Kaiser will be furious at the oversight."





PRINCE ZU EULENBURG
Photogravure—From an original portrait



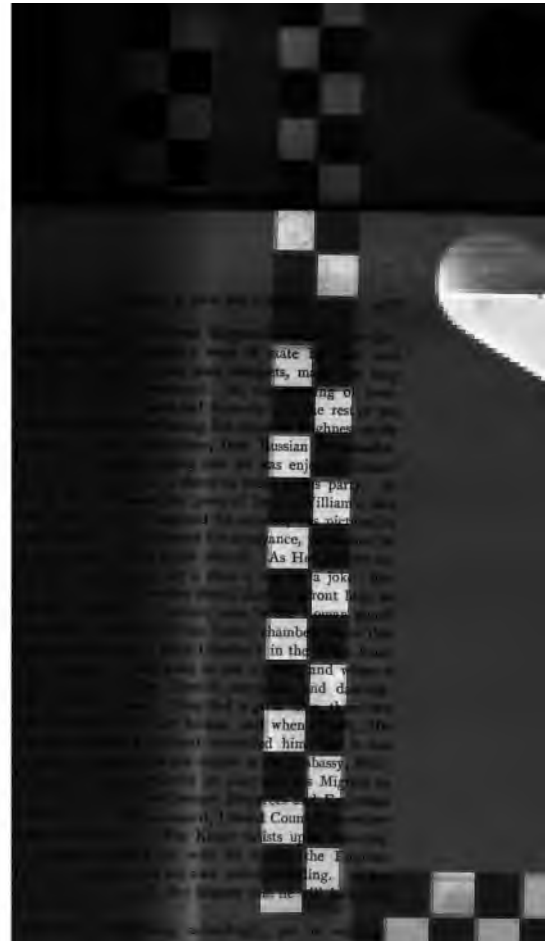


"The thought that it requires but a movement of my thumb to have your heads take the place of the boars' on yonder platter."

The craze to "show off" is egoism on its hind legs,—a very different brand from the harmless amusement William finds in pronouncing toasts to his grandmother in the words: "I drink to the health of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, *Chief of my First Guard Dragoons*," or even from the speech the Kaiser made in deposing Count Waldersee as Chief of the General Staff, when he insinuated that, by removing him to the province "where Her Majesty, the Empress, first saw the light," royal honors (instead of a slight) were conferred upon him.

Some of our courtiers excuse all the Kaiser does on the plea of impulsiveness, a condition which they take to be an attribute of genius. Whether his egotistical brutality breaks up a banquet, as it did August 16, 1893, when he drove to the Casino of the Guard Dragoons merely to say that, as Counts Herbert and Wilhelm Bismarck were in attendance, he, the Kaiser, preferred to eat at home, or whether he spoils a family reunion like the one planned for the wedding of *Mademoiselle* von Wedell with Count Bismarck-Bohlen (in February, 1897), when the bride's father was commanded to ask Herbert Bismarck to stay away from his cousin's nuptials as otherwise His Majesty would withdraw his presence,—whether he imperils the future politics of the *Reich* by accusing a Crown Prince to his father, or by making ill-natured remarks about another heir's bride-elect,—these complaisant drawbacks say the sovereign must neither be blamed nor criticized. "*Tel est mon plaisir*," and there is an end of it.

But woe to others assuming like privileges! There was Nicholas, for instance, now Czar of all the Russias, but merely a gay young gentleman when a visitor at our Court



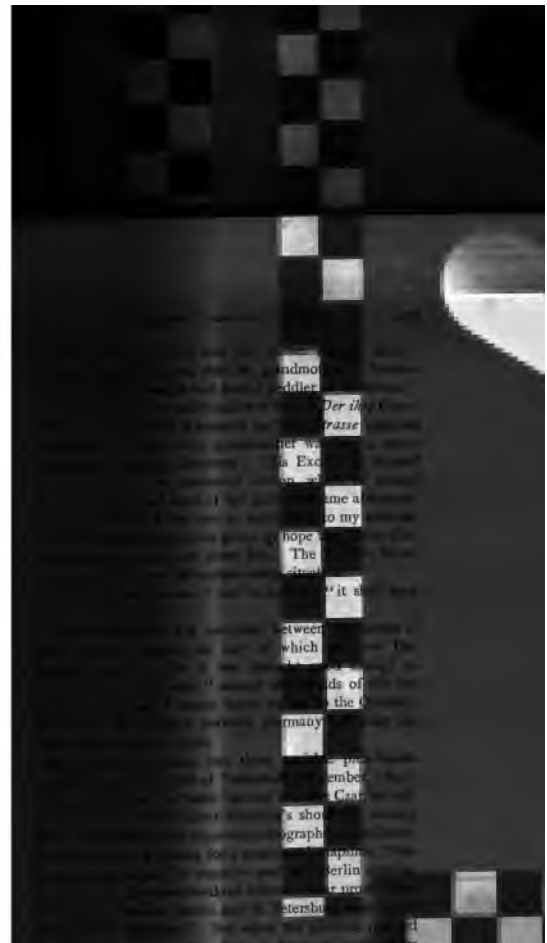


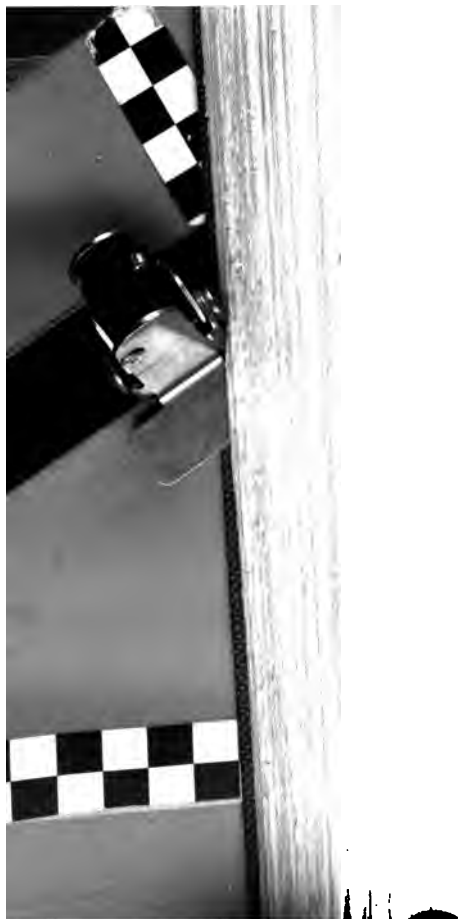
his son's disregard for the decencies of life and denouncing his proclivities for vice. But twenty-one months later they carried Alexander to the Peter-Paul Cathedral a dead man, and Nicholas, the slurred and despised, mounted the throne of the Northern Empire. The period of uncertainty and anxiety respecting the Russo-German *entente*, that followed, until at last the Breslau meeting was arranged, must be still fresh in the reading public's memory.

The other incident alluded to happened at the banquet held in honor of Li Hung Chang at the Neues Palais in June, 1896. Toward the close of the repast, Gun-charger Rieger, on duty behind the Emperor's chair, handed his master a despatch. To tear open the envelope, read the message, and burst out laughing, was the work of a moment. These strange antics—they must have been strange indeed in the eyes of a Chinese—the Bismarck of the yellow jacket and the three-eyed peacock's feather viewed with wonderment, and William, observing Li's looks, ordered the interpreter to inform the Viceroy that his, the Kaiser's, merriment was caused by the news of an important engagement of marriage. Now Li wants to know everything, whether it be the bottom of a *magnum*, or a family affair. So he sent word that he would be obliged if His Majesty cared to tell him which of his friends had made a fool of himself.

In answer the Kaiser handed the interpreter the telegram. It announced the betrothal of the Prince of Naples to Princess Helene of Montenegro.

Soon afterward the dinner came to an end, and Li, still puzzling, heard the Kaiser say a few words to Count Eulenburg which made that gentleman laugh even more immoderately than the Kaiser had done. "See what the joke is, and be sure to get a satisfactory answer at last," demanded the Viceroy impatiently.





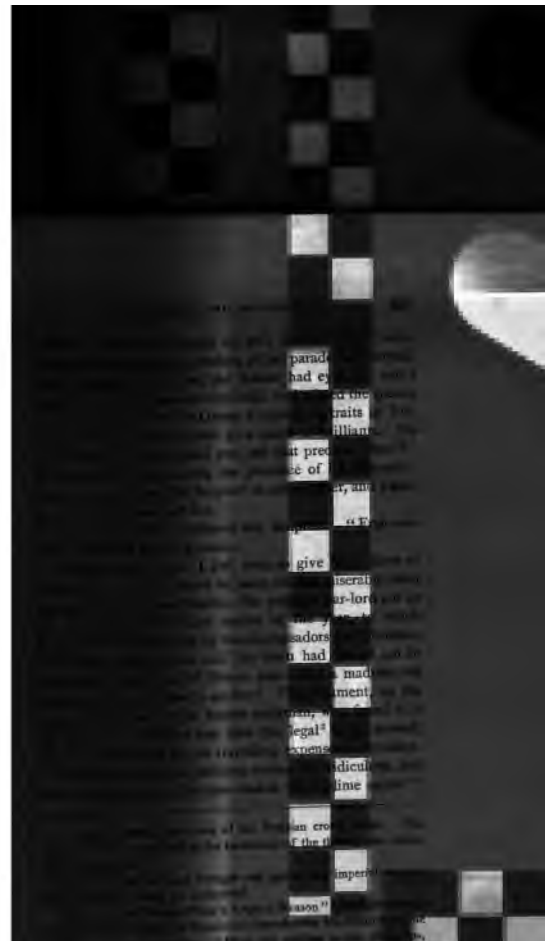
and the official telegraph and news companies received orders to "feature this piece of intelligence and give wide publicity to the fact that a fraud had been practised upon the public."

Then there was that greatest of Berlin military spectacles, the annual spring parade on the Tempelhofer Feld (June 1), which in all sorts of weather attracts Berliners by the hundred thousand, besides tens of thousands of visiting foreigners. Last year (1897) the heavens were most considerate,—a beautiful, clear sky, neither excessive heat nor annoying dust,—the masses promised themselves most elaborate pageants. Everybody was quite sure that not only the usual two, but at least three, passings by of the Guard Corps would take place. But the reverse happened. The troops had no sooner filed by their Majesties once, than the Kaiser delivered a short *critique*, and that done, trotted off the field, amid ominous silence and facing a most disrespectful populace. By the time the gala coaches with the ladies of the Court were driven along the lines, however, the sweet plebs had recovered its voice.

"If they can't attend a review together without fighting, let *her* stay at home." "Why did she not get off her horse and into her carriage?" "Next year we will all bring a box of cold-cream along." With such and similar remarks, coined for our benefit, we were bombarded as we slowly wended our way to the spot where Her Majesty's landau was halting.

"Heavens," I said, "they are talking of the Empress!"

"Is it possible?" replied Countess B——, with a little shudder. At that moment, a ragged urchin, riding on the shoulders of a stalwart son of toil, shouted into my ear: "*Hat sie sich wirklich durchgeritten?*" The impudent query was greeted with loud guffaws, and indecent offers of assistance were heard on all sides.





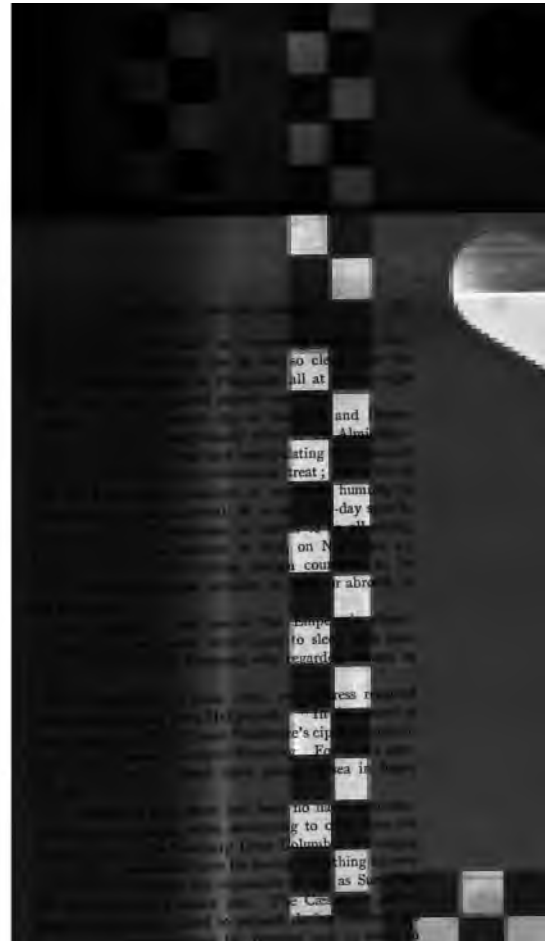
After chasing, Paul-fashion, from the parade to wrangle with a servant, His Majesty sat down to dedicate a number of Bibles for the new Berlin garrison church, inscribing them as follows:

"I will walk among you and will be your God and you shall be my people." "Ye shall walk in all the ways which I have commanded you." "Without me you can do nothing." He signed each sentence "Wilhelm, *Imperator, Rex*," and omitted quotation-marks, as well as book, chapter, and verse, by which to indicate the origin of the phrases.¹ "They shall stand by themselves as expressions of my royal will," he said to Her Majesty.

In September followed the "divine-appointment" speech at Coblenz, and in December Prince Heinrich's declaration of self-abasement: "I will carry forth the *evangelium* of Your Majesty's sacred person; I will preach it to those who want to hear it and also to those who don't want to hear it." If this be not progressive big-headedness, it would be idle mockery; yet no one acquainted with William and his ways will consider the alternative for a moment. On the contrary, it is a well-authenticated fact that His Majesty has taken Vespasian's death-bed jest—"Voe, puto deus fio" (Methinks I am becoming a god)—in bloody earnest from the beginning of his reign. I have now before me a copy of a despatch His Majesty sent to Prince Bismarck from Constantinople on November 9, 1889, all the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, not in the Kaiser's suite on that occasion, having received fac-similes of the message, to keep them posted on the imperial party's progress.

"We had an excellent voyage from Stamboul," says the imperial navigator,—“weather splendid, color-effects and

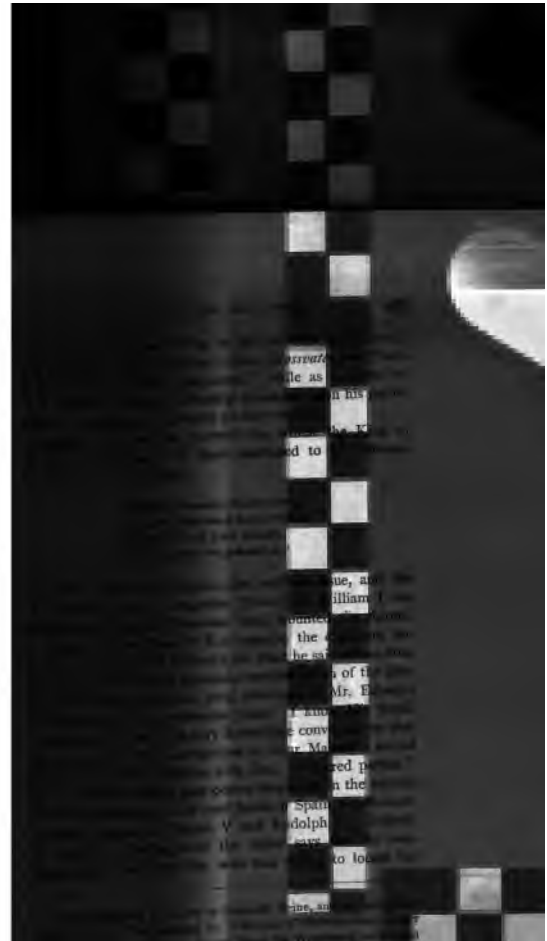
¹ The phrases are transcribed from Leviticus xxvi, 12; Deuteronomy v, 33; John xv, 5.



over the elements." The people of his household were forced to accompany him, and one of them, named Silanus, was executed for absenting himself from the dangerous outings. It looks almost as if the fear of sharing Silanus's fate (in moderated form) had something to do with Waldenae's appeal to the Empress, for "Uncle Alfred," too, swallowed a bucketful of water on the occasion when William got his fill.

The Kaiser's divine-appointment speech at Coblenz, August 31, was a fitting *résumé* of his claims as God's viceroy, repeated over and over again since that 15th of June, 1888, when, in a "general order," he pronounced the astounding notion that he was "accountable for the army's honor and success to his grandfather," who was then dead one hundred days.

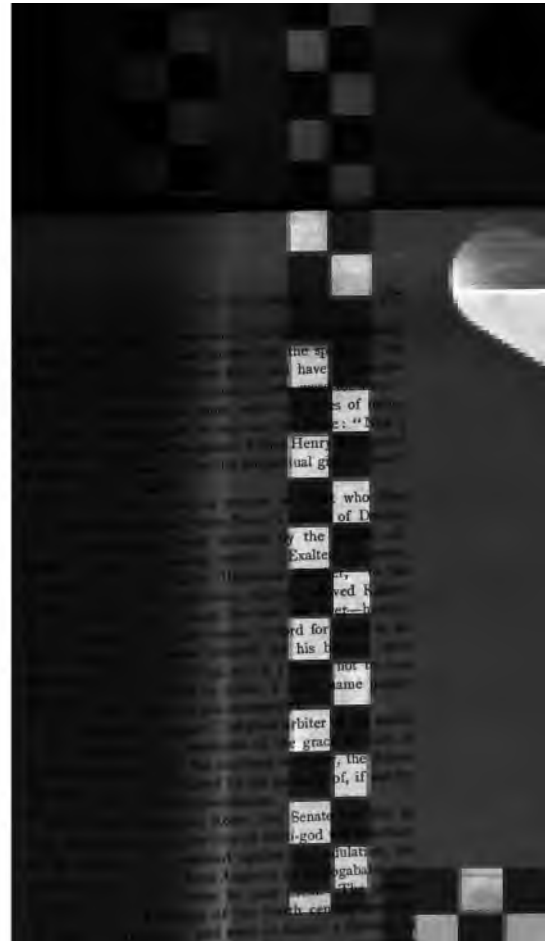
That the "Hohenzollerns took their crown from God's altar," and that "they are responsible to no one but the Almighty,"—how often do we hear this story, how easy would be its denial upon proofs mouldering in royal Prussian archives! According to these proofs, six million of Thalers and ten thousand stalwart bodies of subjects—enlisted, pressed, and stolen—were paid and furnished by Frederick I to the proud Hapsburger before the curtain rose upon the Königsberg comedy, and even then it was half spoiled by the newly-made Queen taking a pinch of snuff just as the ceremonies were at their height! And the man who conducted the negotiations, bought up the Austrian, the *Reich*, the Muscovite, England, and the Pole, and did not succeed in winning over either the Holy See, France, Denmark, or Sweden, the man who actually forged the bauble for which you, oh, William, claim heavenly origin, was Kolbe, *Louis* to Countess Wartenberg, the *Kurfürst's* *maitresse en titre* (but not *de facto*, for very good reasons), a publican's daughter.



imperial patient's stomach under the quilt, by the thundering words: "Stop, you are touching the holy Roman belly."

To return to Prince Henry. He has never originated anything. A careless, unlettered youth, he spent his first years of manhood as riotously as his slender allowance permitted. To save him from himself, he was married, at the age of twenty-six, to his cousin Irene, an amiable woman, of domestic habits, but without an ounce of *esprit*. "His father," the late Princess of Hohenlohe once said, "was just such a man, but fortunately he had a wife that prodded him on and forced him to acquire knowledge and assume at least a semblance of interest in literature and the fine arts."

Wedlock made of Henry a thoroughly self-satisfied person; he was master of his house, and responsible to no one for his likes and dislikes now, except, of course, such as affected the service. But being devoted to the sea, he takes restrictions of that kind as something akin to the inevitable. As to the relations between the royal brothers, they were never hearty and are frequently strained. Princess Irene and my mistress dislike each other, and the men, quite naturally, take their wives' parts. As a subordinate officer, however, His Royal Highness has always done his very utmost to please the Emperor. While in the family circle the Kaiser is generally spoken of as "big brother," "big cousin," and so forth, Heinrich never fails to designate and address him as "Lord of the Sea," or "High Admiral." He consults him about the merest details concerning his command, and professes to be thoroughly happy only when His Majesty approves of his conduct as a mariner. Twice, or oftener, I heard him say to William during his occasional visits to Berlin and Potsdam: "Do not forget about that speech of mine for the Marine Club



upon the Koran in his insane delirium, claiming that, according to an inspiration he had had, the laws contained therein were not severe enough. Ivan the Terrible had a perfect mania for impersonating the spiritual lord. He kept in his *entourage* some three hundred slaves in monk's dress, whose abbot he professed to be, and whose devotions he directed. After laying waste the city of Novgorod, and burning and slaying twenty-seven thousand, that is, nine-tenths of its inhabitants, he collected the survivors at a prayer-meeting, in the course of which he announced that God meant to call the archbishop of the district to account for the blood which had been shed.

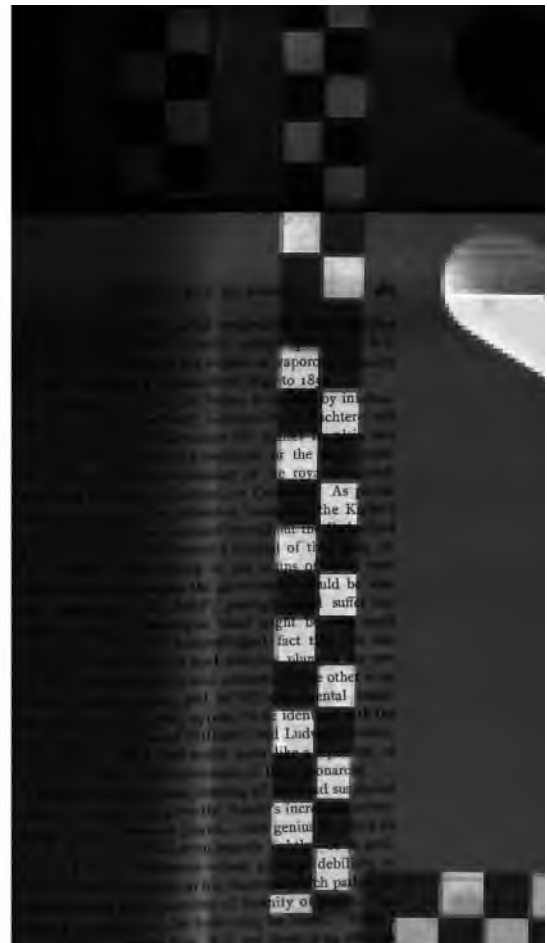
"The Almighty himself has told me so."

This same Ivan wrote to General Kurbeki :

"You threaten me with the judgment of Christ in another world. Is the power of God not also in *this* world? That is a heresy of the Manichæans. You think that God reigns in heaven, and the devil in hell, but that men rule on earth. No, no; the Kingdom of God is everywhere,—in this life as well as in the next."

Ludwig of Bavaria never went half so far as William in the matter of claiming divine inspiration; but that he, too, imagined he held extraordinary relations to the Almighty is evident from the fact that, according to the late Queen Marie's *Hofdame*, he was wont to tell his mother that she had better cease her prayers for him, as he meant to "fight it out with *his* God himself."

Frederick William IV was a devout Christian to the end, but for that very reason, or despite it, he thought himself "God's elect," and "intrusted with the Lord's vicegerency" *in optima forma*. He considered that he was "responsible to no one but Him, who had placed him in charge of the Prussian flock." "He reigned by divine commission,"—"his crown bore the celestial trade-mark,"—



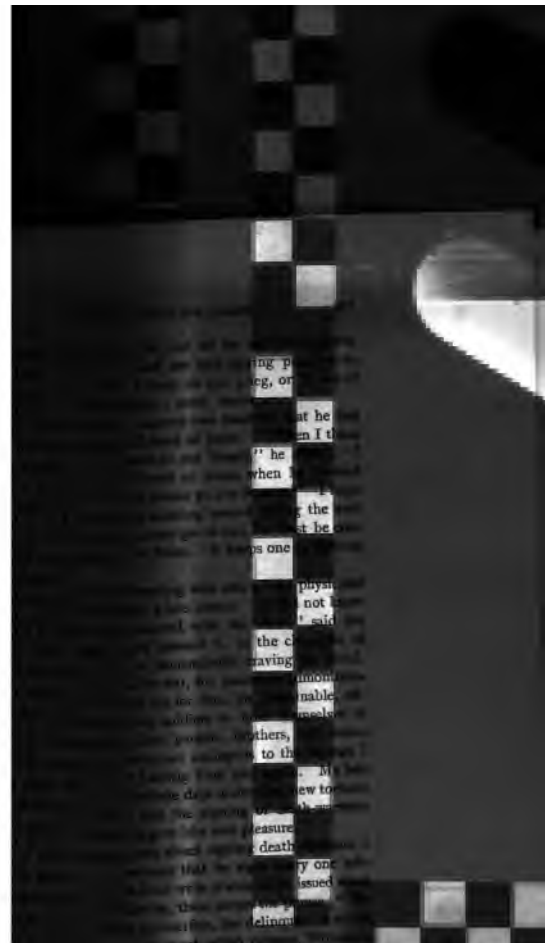


prove the Emperor insane (such an undertaking would be presumptive on the part of a layman); I merely desire to complete the picture of William II as he is, physically and mentally, by setting down facts and recording observations which it was my privilege and misfortune to experience and witness, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Doubtless the telegrams to the Empress, following in the wake of all imperial hunting excursions, and announcing the number of game killed, are very gratifying from a sportsman's standpoint; but, considering that William's reign yielded not a single act of pardon, or of humane kindness, these records of blood appear the reverse of harmless. It is one thing to measure strength and wits and the velocity of one's own or one's horse's legs with the beasts of the forest, and another to butcher game, released from the pens, by the hundred, as the Kaiser does every fourth day in the year. The Indian Sultan Toghlak once set out with a large hunting-party for the district of Beiram; when he arrived in the territory, he told his attendants he had not come to kill beasts, but men, and "without obvious reason," says his biographer, Ibn Batuta, "he began to massacre the natives. After putting the citizens of a large town to the sword, hundreds of others were given over to the Sultan's elephants, which, throwing them in the air, caught them on knives fastened to their tusks, or trampled them under foot to the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums." That is only one historic example of many, where the hunting fever has developed into murderous frenzy.

During the last five or six years of his life, Ludwig II used to vary the monotony of his exertions for inventing new building projects by studying minute accounts of battles and other gory happenings, and afterward, his brain aflame with visions of blood, he would fall upon a flunky

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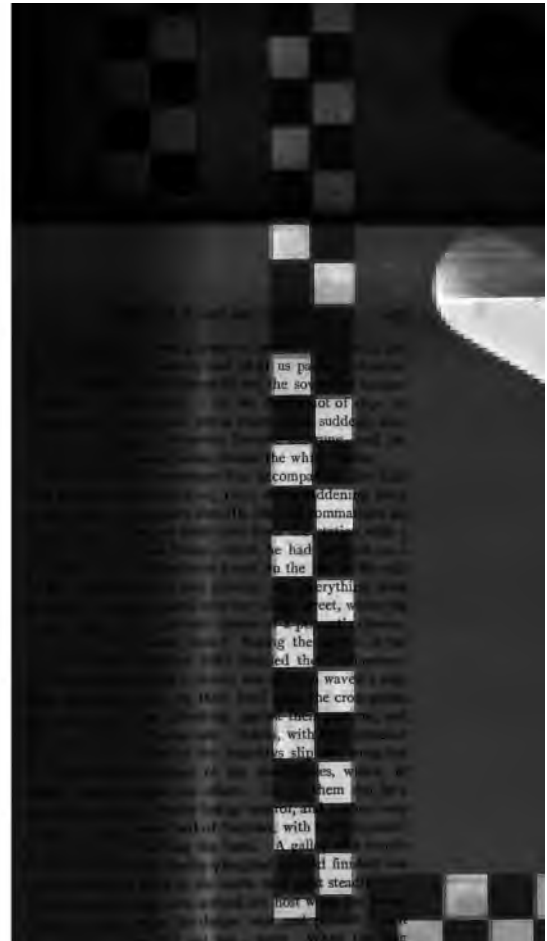




or officers punished for exceeding their authority. He approves of insane big-headedness even in others. Previous to the William the First celebration, many thousand petitions arrived in the Kaiser's mail, but His Majesty, being busy with the preparations for "*Willehelm*," refused even to see the extracts and recommendations which the Minister of Justice had prepared from the papers sent in. "I have no time for miscreants," he said to Herr von Lucanus: "let a few men suffering for defending their honor, sword or pistol in hand, be picked out and I will set them free. As for the rest, they must take their medicine." When Professor Mommsen declined the title of "Excellency," it was whispered in the Palace that His Majesty's refusal to interfere on behalf of the numerous writers and authors imprisoned for their political convictions prompted the scientist; but, as a matter of fact, Mommsen acted on the score that it would be absurd to accept honors at the hands of a crazy person.

The Munich medical man already quoted went on to say that consultation with the Emperor's physicians convinced him that William was very much like Ludwig in respect to physical ailments and their consequences. "Like the Kaiser, my old master was possessed of an abnormal fear of illness, and the very thought of bodily pains as the result of indisposition, a dental operation, for instance, unmanned him." To his nervous condition the doctor attributes Ludwig's general cowardice.

Au fond the Kaiser is a courageous man. I had occasion to verify that at the review of the Second and Third Guard Lancers on Bornstädter Feld in May, 1892, when his mount, a high-stepping stallion, excited by the presence of so many other horses, bolted twice and could scarcely be kept under rein. The Empress and Prince Henry, who had come over for the day, urged His Majesty again and again





from his seat. The ladies, who received His Majesty at the door, say that his face was deadly pale and his lips compressed. Their greeting and congratulations he did not seem to observe, but crept to his room, assisted by his chasseur and adjutants.

When, an hour later, he appeared at dinner, he had not yet recovered his speech, and after vainly endeavoring to swallow a spoonful of soup, rose and retired, supported by Dr. Leuthold, who allowed no one to see his patient. The Kaiser missed breakfast, but attended luncheon, still looking pale and haggard. Then, for the first time, he greeted the ladies of the house and spoke a few words to his host, but when a sprightly young miss at table referred to the accident, he bade her keep silence by an imperious gesture of the hand, while a tremor seemed to run through his body. He would not hear of going to the chase, and left next day for Berlin without having fired a shot.

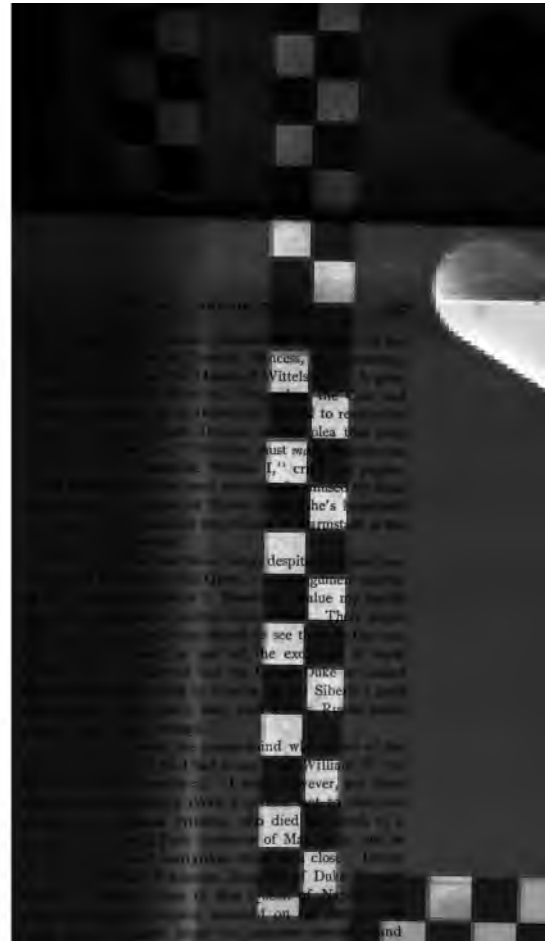
It is said that the Kaiser had an epileptic fit after retiring from table on the night of the accident; feeling the premonitory symptoms of *grand mal* the moment he entered the dining-room, he withdrew after making a show at doing the polite thing. As warnings, in the shape of certain peculiar sensations, up to a short while ago, always preceded his spells, it has been possible to restrict the knowledge of the Kaiser's affliction to his family circle, the highest officials, and to members of the household.

Aside from the Proeckelwitz case, which lacks confirmation, as the attending physician, quite naturally, refuses to be quoted, I know of only two incidents where news respecting the Kaiser's sufferings from that dread malady leaked out. In the midsummer of 1891, some two weeks before their Majesties went to England, the Kaiser was found in his dressing-room at the Neues Palais, lying unconscious across a fallen arm-chair, which he had knocked



Court-marshal should assign infirm pieces of furniture to William-the-Spendthrift is too preposterous to admit of discussion. Lately, I am told, the Kaiser's malady has taken a more aggravated form, the premonitory sensations having ceased. The *falling-sickness* comes upon him suddenly nowadays, and, as in the two instances noted, he lapses into insensibility without a moment's notice when *grand mal* takes hold of him. His Majesty is therefore at present in more imminent danger of suffering injury by the falls peculiar to the disease than ever before, and as a precautionary measure all porcelain vases with cut flowers have been removed from his rooms, the order including even the massive silver receptacles the Empress gave her husband for a birthday present. Two of them, filled with the choicest flowers, stood formerly on the Kaiser's desk, and two more on the centre-table of his dressing-room. My mistress had a good cry when *Kammerdiener* Brachwitz told her they had been locked away by order of Count Eulenburg, who was acting on the advice of the body-physician.

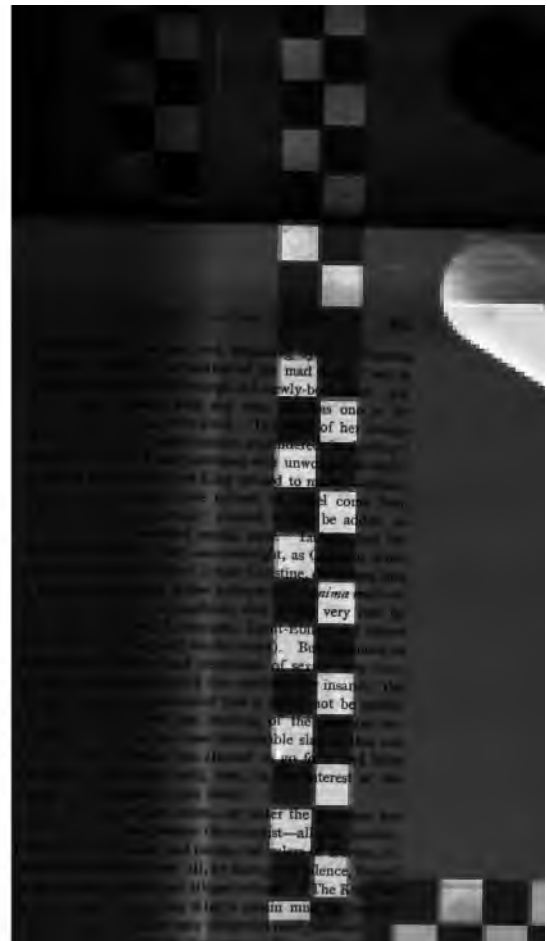
I can add but little to the statements concerning the Kaiser's health, made in other parts of these volumes. His ear trouble is increasing, and Her Majesty, who is as fond of fresh air as Queen Victoria, is much concerned about the foul atmosphere that gathers constantly in the Kaiser's study and dressing-room, or wherever he stays in-doors for any length of time. The belief that this local disease is a carcinomatous growth received a new impetus from the fact that the Grand Duke of Baden's sufferings have been diagnosed as cancer. His Royal Highness, it will be remembered, is the husband of a Prussian Princess, granddaughter of Queen Louise, and sister of the late Frederick III, the Kaiser's sire. Both Queen Louise and Frederick died of cancer, and the physicians hold that



crown. She was a younger sister, too, of her called the Niobe of Queens, poor Elisabeth of Austria. How Princess Sophie died, every one knows: giving the right of way to the humblest attendants of the great charity bazaar, encouraging the terror-stricken, raising and aiding the fallen to escape.

It is said that one's whole life kaleidoscopically passes before the mind at the moment of death. As Princess Sophie was on her knees, expecting to be consumed by the flames surrounding her on all sides, how she must have suffered at the remembrance of that summer day in 1867, when her royal betrothed branded her as an outcast and kicked her marble bust down the grand staircase of Hohen Schwangau as she entered the vestibule of the castle, attended by a brilliant suite. Ever since then the fabled Princess has been held up as the type of a wanton born in the purple. That "on the eve of her marriage to King Ludwig she was pregnant by a gardener's assistant," "that the father of her child—an uncouth boy—was packed off to America,"—these and more details were discussed as openly and shamelessly as might be the capers of a ballet-girl, or a salacious police-court scandal. When, a year later, one of the Orleans Princes led her to the altar, public opinion vouchsafed "he had been well paid for shutting his eyes," and finally, when King Ludwig's mind gave way, it was charged "to that wicked Princess who had first shattered his dreams of ideal love and made him hate womankind." It was all in conformity with the dictum that the King can do no wrong, and when, in the very end, that sorry Majesty changed his robes for a strait-jacket, "it was too late for the official vindication" of a woman who had suffered for a life-time in the interest of what Richelieu called *raison d'Etat*.

The diary of the late Queen Marie's *fille d'honneur*, from which I am quoting, tells the true story, as the Queen



to write love-sick *billets-doux* to grenadiers and induced him to treat his troopers to wine mixed with cantharis. And both Majesties' cousin, the Kaiser, is not wholly exempt from peculiarities that have been classed as hypertrophy of the passions. William is a slave to *amour ftichiste*. Beautiful hands are the objects of his devotion.

All the women the Kaiser ever loved were noted for the delicacy, whiteness, and perfect proportions of their hands. His admiration for Madame Herbette is said to have begun and ended at her slender finger-tips. But since Her Majesty's jealousy and the anonymous letter fiends weaned him of woman's society, this fancy, at first a mere weakness, has abnormally increased.

Affecting a general disregard of woman, as has been his wont for the last two or three years, the Kaiser of late flatly refuses to notice any lady he meets in society beyond a mere recognition, unless she has fine hands. If she satisfies his idea of beauty in this one respect (she may have the nose of a Kalmuck, be chicken-breasted or hump-backed), he will draw her into conversation, compliment her, and, on going away, kiss her hand,—once if under fire of scrutinizing eyes, half a dozen times and oftener when unobserved. I have frequently been obliged to advance silly excuses when hearing His Majesty criticised for wearing many rings on his fingers. The truth is, most of those jewels are duplicates of ornaments he noticed on female hands while admiring and fondling them.

Of course, it is obligatory at Court to wear gloves, and Her Majesty, who is not blessed with an exquisitely-shaped hand, insists upon it that this *usage* be strictly observed, but at supper, after a ball, hop, or concert, the Kaiser always asks certain ladies of his household and of society to remove their gloves. "I have as little use for a gloved hand and arm as for a veiled lady in a redingote," he said once.





Poor, vain creature! she thought, and she thinks to-day, that she saw the *première* of this comedy and that the imperial stage-manager shelved it after this one performance. Yet there are dozens of women and girls in Berlin and Potsdam, in Kiel and Breslau and Königsberg, hugging similar trophies of royal favor, but all are not chatterboxes.

A little while ago I was admiring a new-fashioned sleeve which had just been perfected in the Empress's millinery rooms. It belonged to an evening demi-toilet, and was slashed in half a dozen places on and under the arm. "It's very novel," I said, "but what an amount of work! These slashes are as carefully sewed as button-holes."

"Ah," smiled the simple-minded seamstress, "our papa" (meaning the Emperor) "must always have space for his kisses. If you once give him a finger, he wants the whole arm."

The Emperor never forgets a hand after he has seen it once, a circumstance which keeps Her Majesty in a turmoil of jealous rage. Sometimes, when they drive out together, William interrupts her conversation to say: "Dona, look at that woman's hand. I mean the lady who came out of So-and-So's store. It is worthy of a sculptor."

As the Kaiser watches the women pass, and those at the windows and in carriages, he finds occasion to repeat this sort of comment more than once. Really, one can quite understand the Empress's wrath.

Of late, William has taken to chiromancy, and Heron-Allen's nonsensical "Manual" fights on his desk for the place of honor with Captain Mahan's "Sea-Power." Sometimes, when he quotes the Englishman's gems of thought on "spatulate," "artistic," "philosophic," or "psychic" hands, Her Majesty fails to exhibit that breathless interest which the Kaiser thinks due to all his utterances, and then he reminds her that Louis XIV thought quite as much of

